

THE IMPACT OF THE WEST ON

ARAB NATIONALISM (1952 - 1958)

by

Hamid Enayat



Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Ph. D. to the University of London

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

June 1962

ABSTRACT

The main object of this thesis is to study the impact of the West on Arab nationalism during the period 1952-1958. The year 1952 saw the coup d'etat of the Free Officers in Egypt - an event which marked the intensification of the struggle for Arab unity. The struggle reached its culmination in 1958 with the creation of the United Arab Republic. The choice of this particular period is justified, on the one hand, by the maturity of Arab nationalism as compared with its previous phases and, on the other, by the open, far-reaching conflicts between the Arabs and the West.

But the period can not be properly appreciated, either in its contribution to Arab nationalism or in its bearing on the Arab-West relationship, if sufficient account is not taken of its background. The more so since what we try to differentiate and assess is not a straight chain of events but a tangled web of ideas. Thus, to make our background study adequate to the complexity of the subject in hand, we have had to discuss at great length (in nearly one third of the thesis) the major movements of Arab thought in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

The Western impact has made itself felt both at the theoretical and practical levels of Arab nationalism. To gauge its implications we have had to scrutinize Arab nationalism in its three different aspects: as a theory, as a historical phenomenon and as a political movement. The

thesis tries to show how, on the theoretical plane, Arab nationalism has conducted its fight against the West mainly with weapons which it has borrowed from the West. And it also tries to show how this ironical situation has resulted in multiple contradictions within both Arab political thought and practice. The attempts of Arab religious circles at removing these contradictions and inconsistencies by an out-and-out identification of Arab nationalism with Islam have been studied at some length.

But the thesis, in discussing these issues, tries also to serve another purpose: to carry a stage forward the analyses already made by other writers of the basic postulates and principles of Arab nationalism in its initial phases, and to fill a gap in the Western political literature on the Arabs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction .. .. .	1
<u>THE ORIGINS</u>	
Chapter One: The Birth of the <u>umma</u> .. .. .	8
Chapter Two: Awakenings: Prelude to Unity .. .. .	22
I <u>Westernization:</u> .. .. .	25
Rifa'ah Rāfi' at Taḥṭawī .. .. .	33
Ya'qūb ibn Rafa'īl Sannū' .. .. .	44
Shiblī ash Shumayil .. .. .	49
Ṭahā Ḥusain .. .. .	51
Jamīl Ṣidqī az Zahāwī .. .. .	59
II <u>Islamic Revivalism:</u> .. .. .	65
Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī .. .. .	67
Muḥammad 'Abduh .. .. .	87
Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍa .. .. .	97
'Abd ar Raḥman Kawākibī .. .. .	98
'Alī 'Abd ar Rāziq .. .. .	119
III <u>Egyptian Patriotism:</u> .. .. .	129
Muṣṭafā Kamīl .. .. .	132
<u>UNITY</u>	
Chapter Three: The Call for Unity .. .. .	154
Adīb Ishāq .. .. .	161

	<u>Page</u>
Najīb 'Azūrī .. .. .	162
Modern Arab nationalism .. .. .	177
A Critique of the works of modern Arab nationalists ..	191
Sāṭi' al Ḥuṣrī .. .. .	192
Aḥmad ash Shaibānī .. .. .	213
'Abd ar Raḥmān al Bazzās .. .. .	217
'Abd al Malik 'Udah .. .. .	222
Munīf ar Razzās .. .. .	224
Muḥammad Darawzah .. .. .	239
Nabīh Amīn Fāris .. .. .	248
Mīshāl 'Aflaq .. .. .	255
Dr. Jurj Hanna .. .. .	260
Jamāl 'Abd an Nāṣir .. .. .	268
Conclusions .. .. .	286
Chapter Four: Religion .. .. .	299
Background .. .. .	300
Welcome for Arab Nationalism .. .. .	301
Attitude towards Arab Leadership .. .. .	314
Anti-Westernism .. .. .	318
Reformism .. .. .	324
State and Religion .. .. .	332
Conclusions .. .. .	338
Chapter Five: Militarism .. .. .	345
I The Army: Agent of Nationalist Expression .. .. .	346

	<u>Page</u>
II The Army: Vehicle of Social Reform .. .. .	356
III Doctrinal Factors .. .. .	363
IV Historical Background .. .. .	364
V Resuscitation of the Idea of <u>jihad</u> .. .. .	370
VI Conclusions .. .. .	378
Chapter Six: Neutrality .. .. .	381
I Britain .. .. .	386
II The United States .. .. .	391
III The Arab Reaction - Conclusions .. .. .	397
Bibliography .. .. .	408

---

## SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

---

هزة	=	و
تاء	=	T
ثاء	=	TH
جيم	=	J
حاء	=	H
خاء	=	KH
ذال	=	DH
زاي	=	Z
سين	=	S
شين	=	SH
صاد	=	Ş
ضاد	=	Ḍ
طاد	=	Ṭ
ظاء	=	Ẓ
عين	=	‘
غين	=	GH
فاد	=	F
قاف	=	Q
كاف	=	K
واو	=	W
هاء	=	H
ياء	=	I , Y

---

Note 1.

The letter tā marbūṭah is transliterated by "ah", except in the case of the word umma which seems to be more common in European sources than the form ummah.

Note 2.

The sign (') is also used after a tā marbūṭah followed by a word beginning with a vowel sound in which case the tā marbūṭah is transliterated by "t".



## INTRODUCTION

There are features in Arab nationalism which grow out of genuine Arab life; which stem, that is, from political, economic and social conditions prevailing in the most advanced of the Arab countries, as well as from the teachings of the Koran and great Islamic philosophers. But there also are features in Arab nationalism which derive from the impact of Western modes of thought and life on the Arab world. It is the object of this thesis to assess the nature and extent of this latter impact.

Some Western statesmen have made the mistake of interpreting Arab nationalism as a static factor, with unalterable and tangible characteristics and, this being their assumption, whatever policy they have adopted towards Arab nationalism, whether trying to appease or to oppose it, consequently was wrong. Throughout the history of the interaction of the Arabs and the West the Arabs, perhaps because of their natural adaptability, have been better at improvising policies while the West has relied much more on long-accepted ideas and principles. In our changing world of today it is with improvisation rather than otherwise that the advantages have lain.<sup>1</sup>

In order, therefore, to make as correct as possible an assessment

---

<sup>1</sup> However, a modern Arab writer denounces improvisation (in Arabic irtifaʿal) as one of the causes of the present "crisis of Arab thought". (Dr. Iṣḥāq Mūsā Ḥusaynī, azmat' al fikr al 'arabī, dār bairut, Beirut, 1954, p. 17.)

of the impact of the West, we shall have to view Arab nationalism both in its dynamic and in its static aspects. As a dynamic phenomenon, i.e. as an idea-in-becoming, Arab nationalism is a composite of three factors in recent Arab history: First, the urge for progress with all its prerequisites of self-determination and democratic government; this has been the result of Arab contact with the modern, i.e. Western, world. Second, the striving for unity; this has been the outgrowth of the Muslims' reformism at the end of the nineteenth century. Third and last is their consciousness, or knowledge, of belonging to a common homeland; this has been consequent upon the adoption of the Western concept of patrie. Arab nationalism thus represents the confluence of three streams of Arab thought: 1) Westernization, 2) Islamic revivalism, 3) Patriotism. As a persisting phenomenon, i.e. a phenomenon viewed in the context of the present age, Arab nationalism comprises three features: a) the growing dominance of religion, b) the upsurge of militarism and, c) neutrality. These features will need also to be studied to complete our assessment.

One needs to notice that the Western impact has been in part non-deliberate and even unconscious, in part deliberate and conscious. In its non-deliberate aspect it has made itself felt through voluntary and non-official contacts between the Europeans and Arabs, through the impersonal, untrammelled and sweeping flow of Western science, culture and art. Where deliberate, it has taken the form of definite political and economic policies as well of organised, sophisticated cultural and re-

religious missions. Like so many other distinctions this one, between these two kinds of impact, is bound very often to become blurred. But the distinction is both necessary and real. An illustration will serve to clarify the point, namely, the introduction of the concept of democracy and laicism into the Arab countries.

The introduction of the concept of democracy into the Arab countries has not been due to the deliberate achievement of any particular Western government. When the idea of setting up parliaments and other democratic bodies to ensure the rights of the people and the obligations of officialdom took command of the minds and consciences of progressive and enlightened Arabs this was not through the efforts of such and such a British colonial officer or such and such a French missionary. On the contrary, there were cases in which both British and French forms of colonialism opposed the growth of any political practice which might fester the interest of the people in the affairs of their country and thereby incite them to independence. But although the basic principles of democracy were familiar to the Arabs, thanks to the Koranic injunctions and to the behaviour of the First Four Caliphs,<sup>1</sup> their leading

---

<sup>1</sup> In his short but masterly essay entitled "Science, Democracy and Islam", Humayūn Kabīr, the contemporary Indian Muslim writer, vindicates the democratic substance and temper of the Islamic teachings. His arguments on this point are rather concerned with the underlying principles of Islam than with its history. He starts off by describing the three basic concepts governing the growth of science; these are the uniformity of the universe, the universality of the laws of nature and the value of the individual instance. He then goes on to prove that democracy is but the application of these three principles to the social life of human beings

minds came to imbibe these principles mainly through the study of the works of Western proponents of democracy and equality, especially those of the French pre-revolution and of English liberalism, through personal observations and experiences in the Western countries and through the free-lance efforts of these liberal Europeans who took an active interest in the social, economic and political conditions of the Arabs, addressing some of their works to them.

(cont.)

"From the homogeneity and unity of the world," he says, "follows the universal application of moral and political laws. From the uniformity of the laws of nature follows the equality of all before the law. From the emphasis on the particular instance follows the recognition of the dignity of the individual human being." (p. 11). Having adumbrated these principles, the writer proceeds to demonstrate their "remarkable similarity" with the basic concepts of Islam. The first pre-supposition of both science and democracy is the existence of a unitary world; Islam expresses its belief in this unitary world by emphasizing the unity of the Godhead in "a manner which has been rarely equaled by any other religion". Islam accedes to the second principle of science and democracy, namely, the universality of the Law, by holding that, "as a religion valid for all times, it must reveal the eternal nature of truth ... and that since God is one and reason seeks to express His nature, the Laws of reason cannot but be the same for all". But more interesting and original is the writer's argument on Islam's position as regards the third principle, i.e. reverence for the individual. By denying the distinction between the phenomenal and the transcendent, Muslim religious thought values nature not as a symbol of something hidden but for its own sake. When the reality of the empirical is recognized, the particular comes to its own, for the empirical is always relieved in particular as the human personality. On this basis many philosophical schools in Islam, including the wafūdī and the shuhūdī, have emphasized that the individual cannot be regarded as a mere element in a universal system but it has an independent status of its own. "The over-riding unity of God," concludes the writer, "seems to be challenged (in Islam) by the uniqueness of the individual." (Humayūn Kabīr, Science, Democracy and Islam, and other essays, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1955.)

Laicism, in the sense of recognition of the divorce between state and religion,<sup>1</sup> being a logical conclusion of the Western concept of democracy, provides also another example in this respect.

For these reasons, the adoption of the concept of democracy and a laic system of government (in all but name) by the Arab countries should be regarded as aspects of the West's unconscious "impact".

But running parallel to the above development there have been the conscious, organised and deliberate efforts of the West to acquire and expand its political and economic influence in these countries. To ensure the survival of its influence the West has tried, among other things, to raise pro-Western statesmen to power and even to promote anti-democratic, repressive regimes, ruthless in their crushing of any opposition to the Western concessions and privileges in their countries. This second development has often countered and neutralised the first, leading to severe setbacks for the cause of democracy and laicism. In the field of foreign policy, it has alienated the Arab nationalists, forcing them to pursue a peculiar brand of the policy of neutrality.

---

<sup>1</sup>In English, laicism is often used in the sense of non-ecclesiastical, although the term itself, especially in view of its origin (the Greek laikos, people) allows for a much wider meaning, i.e. non-religious or "rationalist". The term adopted in English political writing for this second meaning is secularism, while the French authors use laïcisme. Remaining loyal to the French tradition, which is still prevailing among most Persian and Arab theorists, the present writer, in speaking about the relationship between state and religion in the Arab countries, has preferred laicism to secularism.

The present thesis will be, in fact, composed of two parts! In Part I, entitled "The Origins", there will be studied the origins of Arab nationalism with stress on those movements of thought which brought about the Arab awakening in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century; this will be done in the chapters entitled "The Birth of the Umma" and "Awakening".

Then will follow Part II of the thesis, entitled "Unity"; this part consists first of a survey of the principles and ideas of Arab nationalism as propounded by modern Arab political thinkers and theorists. This survey will not only give an insight into relevant changes which occurred in Arab political thought under the impact of the West, but also throw light on how contemporary Arab intellectuals see the general problems of their community in the present day world. This will be done in the section called "The Ideas of Arab Nationalism" and will constitute the theoretical part of our study.

The final chapters of Part II will be devoted to the three main features of Arab nationalism, viz., "Religion", "Militarism" and "Neutrality", in the sections so headed. These sections will show us, on the one hand, how democracy and laicism, the two most positive achievements of Western influence in the Arab countries, are being abandoned, giving place to military rule and religious revival (not reformation) and, on the other hand, how that partisanship in world affairs, which was one of the fundamental traditions in Islam, is being replaced by neutrality. This will

constitute our study of the practical aspect of Arab nationalism.

---

Finally, a word on the claim to the "originality" of the thesis. It is true that the survey here presented of the works of various Arab thinkers and leaders may not be called "original" in the sense that there has not previously been any such analysis or mention of these works. But it can, with a show of justice, be claimed that all the ideas and movements analysed or criticised in this thesis are considered from a viewpoint which has so far received little attention; the extent to which the impact of the West has affected and moulded those ideas and movements.

ORIGIN



## Chapter One.

### THE BIRTH OF THE UMMA

We shall start here with a historical study in broad outlines of the significant changes which, since the beginning of Islam, have marked Arab political thinking as regards the idea of nationhood. Such a study is essential to any serious assessment of the strength and/or weakness of Arab political thought today.

The Arabic word for nation is umma.<sup>1</sup> Originally this word was used of any group of people for whom a prophet had been assigned, embracing both those who accepted and those who rejected the prophet's message.<sup>2</sup>

But politically, umma achieved its full significance with Muḥammad's announcement of his apostolic mission. One of the acknowledged, principal aims of Islam, as it was presented to the Arab bedouins and town-dwellers, was their unification into an organised community, or umma, whose main characteristic was submission to Muḥammad's interpretation of the divine plan of salvation. Thus when first used the word had a dis-

<sup>1</sup> Etymologically, the word is believed to be a derivative of umm, mother (Louis Massignon, "l'Umma et ses Synonymes" in Revue des Études Islamiques 14, 15 (1), Paris, 1940-46, p. 152.) Compare this with the origin of the word nation (from nat - ppl. stem of nasci, to be born).

<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Haim, "Islam and Arab Nationalism" in Die Welt des Islams, N.S.4., 1955-56, p. 131.

tinently religious connotation<sup>1</sup> and, especially during the first period of Muhammad's prophetic activity, it was exclusively applied to the closest community of his followers. After he had finally broken off relations with the pagans of Mecca and migrated with his followers to Medina, he created a new community. In Medina, the term umma went beyond the circle of Muslims proper and included those citizens of Medina who had not yet heeded his religious appeal. The Constitution of the Community of Medina, which gave a concrete expression to the unification of the inhabitants, "expressly states that the citizens of the town, including the Jews, formed an umma". Politically this was a step forward; but linguistically it involved a setback; contrary to its original connotation, umma was henceforward applied, in addition to Muslims only, to those non-Muslim Arabs who were maintaining peaceful relations with the believers.<sup>2</sup>

The predominantly political character of this new umma was however only makeshift. As soon as Muhammad felt himself firmly established,

---

<sup>1</sup>The Koran, with one or two exceptions, always uses the word umma as referring to ethnical, linguistic or religious bodies of people who are the objects of the divine plan of salvation. According to the Koran, God has sent to each umma a messenger (sura vi, 42; x, 48; xxiii, 29; xvi, 38, 65; xxxiii, 46; xxxix, 17; xl, 5) or administrator (sura xxv, 22, 40) to guide them on the right paths. Sometimes the term is also applied to companies of the righteous among the ahl-al-kitāb (sura iii, 103 et seq; v, 70; xi, 159; cf. ii, 128, 135; vii, 167, 180; xi, 50). (R. Paret, "Umma" in The Encyclopedia of Islam, Leiden, 1932.)

<sup>2</sup>Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al 'arab; Beirut, 1956, XII, p. 28.

and had defeated the pagan Meccans, he was able to exclude from his politico-religious community those Medinese, especially the Jews, who had not yet adopted his religion; consequently, the umma again came to be applied to Muslims proper. When the power of Islam began to expand and to comprise various nationalities, the word lost its previous exclusively Arab character. The essential thing about this new version of umma was still its religious foundation.<sup>1</sup>

R. Paret says<sup>2</sup> that the final result of this evolution of a closed Arab community into an open, vast cosmopolitan one was "fundamentally different from the starting point". This, apart from its obvious historical denotation, might be taken to mean that Muhammad's original idea was to create a united Arab nation, rather than a cosmopolitan community. Besides there is also the widely-held view,<sup>3</sup> especially among some past and present Arab writers,<sup>4</sup> that, when creating this cosmopolitan community, Islam assigned its leadership and place of honour exclusively to the Arabs. To substantiate their view, such writers quote a number of verses (ayah) from the Koran, claiming special privi-

---

<sup>1</sup>In Tönnies' terminology the original meaning of the umma can be said to belong to the category of Gesellschaft, or the consciously planned groups, as opposed to Gemeinschaft, or the natural, unplanned groups. (See Ferdinand Tönnies, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, Leipzig, 1887, 3rd ed. Berlin 1926).

<sup>2</sup>The Encyclopedia of Islam, op.cit., p. 1015.

<sup>3</sup>Ter Andrae, Muhammad, The Man and His Faith (translated by Theophil Manzill), George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1956, p. 168.

<sup>4</sup>Muhammad Larawzah, al waḥdat 'al 'arabīyah, al maktab at tijārī, Beirut, 1957, pp. 43, 111 et seq., 384.

leges for the Arabs among the Muslims.<sup>1</sup> Without entering into the maze of over-elaborate exegetics on this point we can say this much with certainty: that the Islamic message was meant for the whole of humanity and, therefore, umma was bound to have a cosmopolitan and egalitarian character.<sup>2</sup>

This egalitarianism is of the very essence of Islam. Ayahs are not few in the Koran reminding Man of his humble origin, of the trifling nature of the stuff of which he is made. Such warnings are clearly aimed

---

<sup>1</sup> Following are the Ayahs which are often quoted from the Koran to demonstrate the predominant position assigned to the Arabs for implementing the Islamic rules:

- 1) "For truly to thee and to thy people it is an admonition; and you shall have an account to render for it at last." (XLIII, 44)
- 2) "Thus we have made you a central people, that ye may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the apostle may be a witness in regard to you." (II, 137)
- 3) "And do valiantly in the cause of God as it behoveth you to do for him. He hath elected you, and hath not laid on you any hardship in religion, the Faith of your father Abraham. He hath named you the Muslims. Heretofore and in this Book, that the apostles may be a witness against you, and that ye may be witnesses against the rest of mankind." (XXII, 78)
- 4) "God hath promised to those of you who believe and do the things that are right, that He will cause them to succeed others in the land, as he gave succession to those who were before them, and that he will establish for them that religion which they delight in and that after their fears he will give them security in exchange." (XXIV, 55)
- 5) "And that there may be among you a qawm (people) who invite to the God and enjoin the just, and forbid the wrong. These are they with whom it shall be well." (III, 100)
- 6) "You are the best folk that hath been raised up into mankind. You enjoin the just, and ye forbid the evils, and ye believe in God." (III, 110)

(All quotations from the Koran are taken from M. Rodwell's translation, London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1953).

<sup>2</sup> Louis Massignon, op.cit., pp. 153-154.

at precluding any illusion about what today might be called a Herrenvolk, and thereby repudiating any eventual claim by a group of people, Muslim or non-Muslim, to special privileges, whether ethnical, social or political, in respect to others.<sup>1</sup> The real distinction in Islam is not that between those among whom Islam originated, i.e. the Arabs, and those who only later learned of God's last message through the Arabs; the distinction is rather between those who accepted, and lived up to, the Islamic injunctions, and those who did not.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, there would have been little ground, if any at all, for Islam's pride in having avoided the parochial prejudice of earlier religions, inter alia, the religion of the Jews, who regarded themselves as uniquely the object of divine salvation.

---

<sup>1</sup>"Now of fine clay have we made the man: then we placed him, a moist germ, in a safe abode; then made we the moist germ a clot of blood; then made the clotted blood into a piece of flesh; then made the piece of flesh into bones; and we clothed the bones with flesh; then brought forth man of yet another make." (XXXIII, 10)

"O Abazar! Raise your head and then look; and then realize that you are not superior to the red (people) among them, nor to the negroes; you are superior to them only by reason of your acts." (A hadith from Muhammad, quoted by Ahmad Shaybani, in his al usus ath thawrawiyah li'l qawmiyat 'al 'arabiyyah, Damascus, 1958, p. 106.)

<sup>2</sup>"O men! verily we have created you of a male and a female; and we have divided you into peoples and tribes that ye might have knowledge one of another. Truly, the most worthy of honour in the sight of God is he who fearest Him most." (XLIX, 13). In the footnote to this ayah, Rodwell writes: "That is, not the most nobly born, like the Koreisch." (The Koran, op.cit., 1953, p. 470.)

## II

The inadequacy of all attempted chronological delimitations of spiritual movements in human history is today accepted even by those who hold to the Aristotelean conception of fixed and determined categories in the field of knowledge. We can fix a beginning and an end for an episode or an event. Not so for ideas and thoughts, haphazard as their occurrence may be and protean as their character definitely is. In the narrative of human ideas and thoughts, periods are not separated from one another by sharp and distinct lines; rather, each period has its origins in its preceding period while carrying in its womb the elements of the succeeding one. With this reservation in mind, one can however discern, so far as the idea of Arab unity is concerned, four different periods in the history of Arab peoples.

The first period commences with the Umayyads coming to power (A.D. 633) and ends with the Abbasids' accession (A.D. 750).

The second period covers the history of the Abbasids, beginning with the revolution of the Eastern part of the Islamic Empire and ending with the fall of Baghdad in 1258.

The third period marks the eclipse of the Arabs until roughly the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt in 1798.

The fourth period can be said to have run from 1798 up to the present.

In identifying and differentiating these periods we must make full allowance for inevitable overlappings - not only in regard to the chrono-

logical order of events, but also to the interplay of thoughts.



The first period (i.e. the Umayyads' rule from 633 to 750) has been rightly described as marking the rise of Arab national feelings.<sup>1</sup> It is to be recalled that simultaneously with the extension of the meaning of umma to include non-Arab Muslims, an opposite development of equal importance took place in the minds of the Arabs, resulting in a situation full of striking contradictions. While Muhammad's call to the worship of one God had enabled the scattered Arabs to achieve their unity, the Arabs' coming into contact with foreign peoples in the course of their large-scale wars of expansion under the Umayyads heightened their own special national consciousness. In other words, while on the theoretical plane the concept of the umma as a cosmopolitan community of Muslims with equal rights and duties was being recognised and to some extent propagated by the Arabs, a parallel process of Arab predominance was also being initiated and promoted on the practical plane.

By establishing a kind of kingship (mulk) and arrogating to themselves all the key positions in the Islamic hierarchy, the Umayyads developed what might be called an Arab aristocracy at the expense of the conquered nations. As Professor Lewis puts it:

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard Hartmann, Islam und Nationalismus, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1948, p. 9.

"The sovereignty exercised by Mu'awiya (the first of the Umayyads) was essentially Arab. No longer religious, but not yet monarchic, it was a resumption and extension of the authority of the pre-Islamic Sayyid."<sup>1</sup>

To bolster up this authority, the Umayyads emphasised and exaggerated the Arabs' spiritual and cultural superiority over their subjects and, as a necessary corollary to this, they suppressed those cultures which had survived the Arabs' invasion. The upshot was the emergence of a new class within the Islamic Empire, that of the Mawālī, or non-Arab (Persians, Egyptians, Arameans and Berbers) converts to Islam. The brunt of the Umayyads' chauvinism, or un-Islamic Arabism, was directed against the Persians who, being the inheritors and holders of a still more advanced culture and civilization, fell victims to the Umayyads' well-hidden spiritual inferiority complex. The Persian converts, more than other mawālī, were subject to all manner of humiliations, ranging from the physical to the social. All this helped to account for that active Persian participation in the anti-Umayyad movement which culminated in the Hashimite revolt of A.D. 746 and the raising of the black flags of the Abbasids in Khorasan, eastern Persia. And this brings us to our second period.

During the Abbasids' regime, the process of Arabization was to a great extent checked, and relatively ample opportunities were offered to the conquered peoples to display their genius, political or otherwise, in running the affairs of the Empire. This was especially in evidence

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bernard Lewis, The Arabs in History, Arrow Books, London, 1958, p. 65.



in regard to the Persians. Not only was the Persian, or anyway non-Arab, Barmecide family allowed to hold the office of the wazirs in the Abbasids' administration, but in addition to this the Persian forms of government were openly adopted. Again as Professor Lewis says:

"... The influence of the old Persian order of the Sassanids became increasingly strong (in the Abbasid administration) and much Abbasid practice is a deliberate imitation of Sassanid habits which were now becoming known from Persian officials and from surviving Sassanid literature. The Abbasid administration was no longer based on racial discrimination and exclusiveness. Its extensive scribal class was recruited to an increased<sup>1</sup> extent from the Mawālī and enjoyed a high social standing."

There was, however, a departure from this egalitarianism under Ḥarun ar Rashīd (786-809), symbolized by such events as the expulsion of the Barmecide house from the administration. Later on in the period, with the emergence of autonomous or independent states and dynasties and the disintegration of the Empire, the Caliphate further stiffened its attitude towards those peoples who were still under its domination. But generally the political and economic weakness of the Empire had robbed Arabism of all its momentum and dynamism, thus excluding the possibility of any revival of Arab predominance in the Islamic world. True, the Crusades could have been used as an occasion for achieving such a purpose, but the fact that the prestige of Islam in those agonizing days was saved, not by the Arabs, but by an Armenian Kurd (Ṣalāḥ ad Dīn al Ayyūbī) must have dealt a further blow to any schemes for Arab domination.

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bernard Lewis, op. cit., p. 84.

The most significant outgrowth of Islamic egalitarianism in the earlier part of this period was a flourishing of Islamic culture to which the intellectual genius of all the conquered peoples, through the common medium of Arabic language, made weighty contributions. A loosening of the old tightly centralized Arab rule in the concluding phase of the period was also responsible for this.

There is not much that can be said, within the scope of our purpose in this chapter, about the third period, from the thirteenth century, when the Mongol cataclysm engulfed the Muslim world, up to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This period formed a long interregnum in the history of Arab consciousness, resulting from Arab decline and demise. With the ascendancy of the Seljuks and the Ottomans, the Arabs faded into complete insignificance. During this period, in the words of Hazim Nuseibeh, Arab nationality "lay dormant for many centuries under the enervating weight of ignorance and stagnation".<sup>1</sup>

We must, however, note that although the period in question was thus characterized by Arab eclipse, it was the scene of three non-Arab Islamic developments of deep import to the subsequent spiritual trends among the Arabs. First was the spread of Sufism.

"The Sufi," writes Professor Smith, "or mystic interpretation of Islam, goes back to, and even through the classical period. Yet at that time it was the treasure of a small minority.... As the Arab period began to weaken,

---

<sup>1</sup>Hazim Zaki Nuseibeh, The Ideas of Arab Nationalism, Cornell University Press, New York, 1956, p. 34.

more and more in Muslim society turned to this somewhat precious version of faith."<sup>1</sup>

The second development was the Conquerors', i.e. the Mongols' conversion to Islam.

"Within fifty years the Mongol dynasty that had subjugated so much of the Islamic world.... itself took on the role of champion of the Islamic cause. The new rulers undertook with conviction, energy and brilliance to promote again the very enterprise that they had recently seemed to overthrow."<sup>2</sup>

The third development was the complete ascendancy of the non-Arab elements in the new wave of military and spiritual expansion which carried the world of Islam northward into Asia Minor, the Balkans and Central Asia, southward into negro Africa and eastward into Indonesia. The Turks under the Ottomans, the Persians under the Safavids, and the Indian Muslims under the Mughuls were the main initiators of this new expansive movement.

We have just said that these three developments were of a deep import to the subsequent spiritual trends among the Arabs. We must add here that this import was of a negative rather than a positive nature; in other words, the stirrings which became evident among the Arabs from the nineteenth century onwards were in reality, and in their inception, hostile reactions provoked, rather than movements inspired, by the aforementioned developments. An instance which is, in fact, unique in its

---

<sup>1</sup>Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Islam in Modern History, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

importance can be singled out by way of illustration. The wahhābiyah, the greatest reformist movement of the period, founded by Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb<sup>1</sup> (1703-1787), was at once a revolt against the immanentism of the Sufis and the extravagance of latitudinarian, medieval empires.

'Abd al Wahhāb's spirit of rebellion against the then institutionalized Islam sometimes verged on a total disassociation from the Islamic history of his time. He spoke of Islam in a tone as nostalgic as if it were, not a persisting fact of history, but rather a departed glory for the return of which all the resources of the faithful should be mobilized.

"True Islam today," he said, "is a thing unknown (gharīb). Most people do not know the difference between it and unbelief."<sup>2</sup> But this "unknownness" was, in his eyes, rather a source of strength, since it should now be possible for the faithful to introduce the original, untarnished form of Islam to mankind. "Islam started unknown," ran a prophetic tradition, "and shall return unknown."<sup>3</sup> It was this attempt at a return to the pristine law of Islam that forged the association between wahhābiyah and the

<sup>1</sup> 'Abd al Wahhāb's career, in its range and variety, is somewhat analogous to that of the later reformists in Islam, especially Afghānī. After studying at Medina, he spent many years of his life in travel. He lived four years in Baḡra, five years in Baḡhdād, a year in Kurdistān, two years in Hamādhān and four years in Iṣfahān. He made a thorough study of all the main sects and schools of law in Islam and, after returning to 'Ulyāina (his birthplace) publicly preached his new doctrine. (Article by D. S. Margoliouth in the Encyclopedia of Islam, IV, part 2, pp. 1086-1090.)

<sup>2</sup> Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb, mukhtāsar sīrat' ar rasūl, Maḡba'at' as Ṣanā'ī Muḥammadiyah, Cairo, 1375/1956, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

Hanbalī outlook of the Saudi rulers. The rejection of all innovation is the gist of the Wahhābī doctrine: "Innovation", says 'Abd al Wahhāb, "is a factor making for unbelief, al bid'ah sabab al kufr".<sup>1</sup>

From our standpoint the significance of the Wahhābī movement lay in the fact that, by ascribing the decline of 'real Islam' to the ascendancy of non-Arab Muslims, it awakened the Arabs, after centuries of slumber, to their share of the Islamic heritage. The assumption now prevalent among many Arab nationalists that Islam stands and falls with Arabism, owes a great deal to the 'puritanism' of 'Abd al Wahhāb.

It is not thus surprising that the first attempt at vindicating the Arab distinctness within the Ottoman Empire should have come from the Wahhābīs, who tried in the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century to throw off the Ottoman domination.<sup>2</sup>

It becomes clear from the above account that when the Western ideas began to infiltrate the Muslim world at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the concept of nationhood was already familiar to the Arabs - thanks to their association with the umma. But compared with the Western concept of nation, umma had one

---

<sup>1</sup>Kitāb al Tawhīd, Manuscript in the British Museum, OR. 4529, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup>Zeine N. Zeine, Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism, Khayat's, Beirut, 1958, p. 37. Dr. Hasan Saab, The Arab Federalists of the Ottoman Empire, Djambatan, Amsterdam, 1958, p. 152 et seq. also p. 252.

notable deficiency: because of its religious character as well as its universalistic application it lacked the geographical differentia of its Western equivalent and, therefore, involved no sense of territorial allegiance. In other words, while nationalism was not alien to the Arab mind, patriotism represented for it a completely new loyalty. We are going to see in the following chapters how the Arabs gradually came to integrate this new loyalty into their system of political values.

## Chapter 2.

### AWAKENING: PRELUDE TO UNITY

We now embark on the analysis of our fourth period of Arab consciousness. From the viewpoint of our study, this is the most important phase in that train of thoughts and ideas which finally launched the Arabs on their striving for unity. Although constituting only a transient chapter in the general narrative of Arab political history, this period provides the main background to modern Arab nationalism and, for that reason only, is deserving of our close attention.

The period of torpor and unconsciousness in the Arab political mind ended gradually with a series of cardinal events and developments that effected deep changes in the relationship between the Arabs and outside powers - namely, the Ottoman rulers and the Western intruders - and served as the motivating influence behind a number of reformist, provincialist and nationalist movements among the Arab peoples throughout the nineteenth and in the early part of the twentieth century. The Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1796, followed by French occupation of Algeria (1830) and Tunisia (1881), British occupation of Egypt in 1882, the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, French occupation of Morocco (1911), Italian occupation of Tripolitania (1912) and the Arab Revolt of 1916 are the major highlights of this period. The heterogeneity presented by this period in its multiferm pattern of socio-

political developments, as well as in conflicting movements of Arab thought, seems to have been outweighed by one particular unifying factor which invested all these developments and movements with a compelling sense of coherence. This was the Arab awakening. And this had both its social and its political connotations; the Arabs of this period were growing more and more conscious not only of their identity, status and past achievements, but also of their political rights and the prerequisites of their progress and prosperity. In spite of their manifold effects and implications, all the aforementioned cataclysms were united by their joint contributions to the ongoing and cumulative process of Arab awakening. The significance of the period did not only arise from the vital part which this awakening played in the subsequent movement for unity; it lay further in the fact that awakening was regarded per se as a desideratum to which the postulated and accomplished unity of the umma was only a fortunate corollary. As we know, the Arabs were already united under the Ottoman rule; it was not, therefore, necessary for them to clamour for unity. In the words of Fayed A-Sayegh:

"That the idea of Arab unity was only implicitly, and as it were potentially, present in the thoughts and aspirations of the leaders of the Arab revival ... may be attributed to two factors. First, the movement (of awakening) was primarily cultural, and not political; and, therefore, political nationalist themes were only infrequently articulated. Secondly, as far as the areas in which the movement was taking shape were concerned, political and administrative unity was already a reality under Ottoman rule; and therefore it was generally taken for granted. Owing to these two factors, the concept of Arab unity was only implicit, and the impulse for unification only pot-



entially present in the awakening of the Arab peoples..."<sup>1</sup>

The umma had thus lost but one of its attributes, i.e. wa'y, or consciousness. And it was to the restoration of this consciousness that the most resourceful and the most dynamic members of the Arab intelligentsia now proceeded to devote themselves. Not that the theme of unity was totally absent from the thoughts and deeds of the Arab revivalists; but by contrast with the later period of the Arabs' nationalist movement it did not constitute the pivotal factor in their political life.

Generally speaking, there were three distinct but inter-related trends which contributed to Arab awakening. These were: (a) Westernization, (b) Islamic revivalism, (c) Egyptian patriotism.

As far as the nineteenth century was concerned, it was the Westernization trend which occurred first in the chronological order to give birth almost imperceptibly to the other two trends. In the beginning, the three trends were irrecegnizable from one another, all presenting a confluence of three varied streams. This is why we find some of the Arab writers and thinkers of the early and middle nineteenth century as champions of a blending of Westernism, Islamic revivalism and patriotism. But as the nineteenth century wore on the three trends branched off on their separate ways, each with its distinct individuality and definite representatives.

One dominant factor lay at the root of all these and other heart-

---

<sup>1</sup>Fayez A. Sayegh, Arab Unity, The Devin Adair Company, New York, 1958, pp. 7-8.

searching movements among the Arabs, and Muslims in general. This was the general decline of the Muslim world which had started in the nineteenth century, and, as its inevitable consequence, the growing disintegration of traditional Muslim social fibre. "There was," says Professor Smith in referring to that period of decline, "a disintegration of military and political power. There was enfeeblement of commercial and other economic life. Intellectual effort stagnated. An effete decadence infected art. Religious vitality ebbed... The Muslim world seemed to have lost the capacity to order its life effectively; Muslim society was losing its once firm, proud grip on the world."<sup>1</sup>

It was in response to this distressing state that lively and ambitious minds among Muslims started to resort to various devices and panaceas in remedying the internal malaise of their community.

This chapter is devoted to a scrutiny of each of the above-mentioned trends in an endeavour to consider the present stirring<sup>s</sup> of Arab nationalism in their right perspective.

## I WESTERNIZATION

Opinions may differ as to the particular event which should be held responsible for the initiation of the process of Westernization in the Arab world. But there seems to be a general concensus that the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798 should occupy a conspicuous place amongst the

---

<sup>1</sup> Islam in Modern History, p. 38.

multiple vicissitudes which may be suggested as a possible starting-point of this process. Let us survey the consequences of that momentous event in the history of modern Egypt.

There are two reasons for our concentration on Egypt, rather than on any other Arab country. First, as compared with other Arab countries, Egypt was enjoying in the nineteenth century a fair measure of cultural development and, more important, had a considerable influence on intelligentsia of the Muslim world through the agency of Al Azhar University.<sup>1</sup> Second, Egypt was the first country to establish contact with the West in the wake of the Napoleonic expedition and her experiment, besides being of great value to the other Arab peoples in their subsequent awakening, constituted in fact much of the background to the later Arab-West interaction.

The Napoleonic invasion set going a twofold evolution in Egypt: first, by introducing the printing press,<sup>2</sup> along with other Western devices

---

<sup>1</sup> There were twenty-five riwāqs in Al Azhar during this period, each of which was devoted to a separate nationality or group of students. The following nationalities represented at the University are worthy of mention: the Kurds, the Turks, the Iraqis, the Somalis, the Indians, the Arabians (from Mecca and Medina), the Javanese, the North Africans, the Afghans and the Persians. (J. Heywerth-Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Egypt, Luzac & Co., London, 1938, p. 25.) See also E. W. Lane, An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, London, 1860, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> The French brought two sets of printing press to Egypt: one, confiscated by Napoleon from the College of Propaganda in Rome, and placed under the directorship of J. J. Marcel, turned out about twenty publications, all in French, "mostly for the use of the French"; the other, under Marc Aurel, published the first issues of Courier de l'Egypte. As has been rightly remarked by Heywerth-Dunne, these publications cannot be claimed to have had any immediate effect on Egyptian culture; they were mostly either books on the Arabic grammar (Exercice de Lecture Arab Litteral, Grammaire

and techniques, it precipitated the Arab awakening through a revival of Arab classics; second, it released that torrential current of Western ideas on the Arab world which has been going on unabated in intensity or range up to this day.<sup>1</sup> But it must at once be added that the initial and immediate reaction of a considerable number of educated Egyptians and other Muslims, when they first came into contact with Western civilization, was one of open admiration and unreserved envy.<sup>2</sup> We will have to recall this

---

(cont.)

Arab Vulgaire, etc.) or different editions of the Constitutions of the French Republic. (Heywerth-Dunne, op.cit., p. 99) It was only afterwards that the printing press became an invaluable instrument in the Westernization of Egyptian, and thereby Arab, culture. Between 1822 and 1842, under M<sup>h</sup>amməd 'Alī, 243 books were printed in Egypt, most of them for the new schools and colleges. (Bernard Lewis, The Arabs in History, p. 172.)

<sup>1</sup>Heywerth-Dunne, op.cit., p. 105.

<sup>2</sup>This statement does not, of course, hold good in regard to such traditionalists as the prominent historian 'Abd ar Raḥmān al Jabartī (1756-1822) who, living through the Napoleonic occupation of Egypt, maintained a basically contemptuous attitude towards the French. Nevertheless, even Jabartī's chronicles are not lacking in occasional admiration of the French. (See 'Abd ar Raḥmān ar Rafī'ī, tarīkh al harakat 'al qawmiyah, maktabat 'an nahdat 'al miṣriyah, Cairo, 1955, fourth edition, pp. 438-439.)

point when, later on, we study the Arab reactions of restiveness and deprecation in regard to the West under more or less similar conditions. As we know, shortly after the Napoleonic invasion, numerous student missions were sent to Europe as part of the Egyptian drive for modernization. It was under Muhammad 'Alī that the dispatch of these missions started. Muhammad 'Alī's policy in this respect went through two periods. In the first period, covering the years 1809 to 1822, he dispatched his missions mainly to Italy. "Italy was probably chosen," says Heywerth-Dunne, "mainly for the reason that it was still no more than a geographical expression and consequently there was no fear of political influence, but on the other hand the reasons may have been purely technical."<sup>1</sup>

The second period, from 1826 to 1844, witnessed a significant change of policy, with most of the students being now sent to France: out of a total of one hundred and eight students sent abroad, sixty-one were sent to that country. It is noteworthy that the vestiges of resentment naturally generated by the French occupation of the country, and especially the

---

<sup>1</sup> This process was reversed after the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. (V. infra, p. 57, footnote.) Some writers have, however, questioned the relation between the Napoleonic invasion and the changes in the social frame of Egypt in the nineteenth century. "It does not seem," writes Shafik Gherbal, "that the French occupation produced a general change of outlook. The rule of France was too short, the conditions under which it was exercised were too adverse, for it to produce profound changes." (Shafik Gherbal, The Beginning of the Egyptian Question and the Rise of Mehmet Ali, Routledge, London, 1928, p. 208.) It has been one of the aims of the present chapter to prove the contrary.

dogged memories of Napoleon's high-handedness towards the Egyptian people,<sup>1</sup> did not prevent the Egyptian leaders from choosing France as the main destination of these missions. This presents a singularly interesting case in the psychology of international relations. All the colonized peoples the world over have been, to various degrees, under the cultural influence of their metropolitan rulers; from this viewpoint the Egyptian enthrallment by French culture might seem quite natural. But what is indeed singular in their case is that this enthrallment came into effect only after the bonds of French political hegemony had been broken - although French economic predominance, as well as back-stage pressures and intrigues, continued for a long time thereafter.

But why did the Egyptian modernizers choose France as their educational and cultural preceptor? To say that France was chosen because she was

---

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the multiple outbreaks of riot and disorder on the part of Egyptians during the brief period of French rule, culminating in the assassination on June 14, 1800, of General J. B. Kleber, the French commander, the very wording of Napoleon's famous proclamation to the Egyptian people, shortly after the fall of Alexandria, on July 2, with all its protestations of friendship for the Egyptians and reverence for Islam, reveals a profound contempt for the conquered. Of special significance is a phrase in the proclamation which threatens to burn down any village in the country which would revolt against the French Army. Remarks a contemporary historian on this point: "(Napoleon's) threat to set fire on these villages which raised the banner of rebellion against French troops does not conform to the standards of humanity in the treatment of nations; no threat of this kind could be found in Napoleon's proclamations to the Italian people during his Italian campaigns.... In his Histoire Scientifique et Militaire de l'Expédition Française en Égypte, Reybaud has omitted the phrase containing this threat, making only a vague reference to it; perhaps he intended to conceal from the reader the amount of cruelty and disregard of the rules of civilization and humanity implied in the phrase." (Abd ar Rahman Rafi'I, tārīkh al barkat al gawmiyah, p. 88.)

a great power seems too obvious and facile a justification. After all, Britain was also a great power, enjoying more or less the same sort of position as France in the Middle Eastern rivalries; and in industrial and technical fields it was Germany that exercised greater attractions than any other power. And yet, even under such pro-British, anti-French rulers as 'Abbas I (1849-1854) and, to a lesser extent, after the British occupation of Egypt (1882) the process of Frenchification of the Egyptian culture seems to have continued.

Two factors can be said to have motivated the Egyptian orientation toward France. First there was the familiar inferiority complex developed by some of the Egyptian rulers as a result of the French occupation; this complex, coupled later by Muhammad Ali's determination to defeat his opponents and rivals, gave rise to the policy of adopting military reform as the main aim of all their educational measures.<sup>1</sup> This was the old error of mistaking the effect for the cause - conceiving military excellence as the secret of progress in other fields, and not the other way round. The second factor was the pressure of the French themselves, who used every possible means for disseminating their language, art and culture among the Egyptians.

"La France," writes M. Sabry, "envoya en Egypte une pleiade d'hommes remarquable tels que les Sève, les Clot, les Cérisy, les Linant, les Coste, les Rousset et bien d'autre encore qui

---

<sup>1</sup> Heyworth-Dunne, op. cit., pp. 159, 197, 203 and 346.

travaillèrent avec zèle et dévouement à l'introduction des arts et de civilisation en Egypte."<sup>1</sup>

The British attitude, by contrast, was characterised from this angle by an astounding passivity. Explaining the reasons for Britain's peer cultural achievements in Egypt under Cromer, Lord Lloyd writes:

"In the first place the general policy of His Majesty's Government precluded any direct attempt to establish the influence of British culture. In the second place, even had the policy been different, financial difficulties would have proved too much for him (Cromer). As he himself pointed out, it was not until 1904 that any funds could be made available for education. By that time the policy of making the best of things as they existed had got too firm a foothold to be dislodged... French culture and French language had been allowed to imbed themselves very firmly in Egypt."<sup>2</sup>

If this remark were true at the time of the British occupation of Egypt, it had been far truer before that period when Britain had not yet secured any foothold in that country.

The Italian and German attempts were negligible, and the Russians were non-existent on the scene.

One final point, which was also important in tipping the balance in favour of France, was that when these student missions gradually came

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Saby, l'Empire Égyptien sous Mohamed Ali, Librairie Orientale, Paris, 1930, p. 576. Also cf. A.A. Paton, History of the Egyptian Revolution, Trubner & Co., London, 1870, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Lloyd, Egypt Since Cromer, Macmillan & Co., London, 1933, p. 159. Also writes another important British authority on the subject of European attempts at establishing schools in Egypt: "Great Britain, it must be admitted, has done very little for Egypt in the way of voluntary schools" (Alfred Milner, England in Egypt, Edward Arnold, London, 1894, p. 368.)



back to Egypt from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, those who had studied in France mostly came to occupy high positions in the administration of the country; whereas those with Italian, English, German or Austrian education were appointed to much lower posts in the technical and engineering fields.

For all these reasons, French culture achieved ascendancy over its European rivals in setting the pace of Westernization in Egypt.

But parallel to the movement of sending student missions abroad (hi'athāt) ran two other developments of telling significance. First was the growth of European schools in Egypt; between 1863 and 1879 nearly seventy-eight French, American, English, Greek, Italian and German missionary schools were opened in Egypt. As the percentage of the Egyptian students of these schools in 1878 has been given as 52 per cent, one is bound to afford them special prominence in an assessment of the educational life of the country during this period. The second, and a much more important development, was the weakening of Al Azhar's hold over the Egyptian system of higher education. This process had already begun under Muhammad 'Alī who, by confiscating the waqf (pious foundation) funds and properties, dealt a mortal blow to mosque education as a whole. But the opening of the new Training School, called Dar al 'Ulūm, in September 1872, with its emphasis on modern learning and its offer of material advantages in the way of food, clothing, and pay, as well as instruction, brought matters to a head. Although the Azharites continued to play an active part under the reigns of Muhammad 'Alī and his successors, as a consequence of the above

measures, al Azhar lost its previous position in the social frame.<sup>1</sup>

What was the effect of these movements and developments on the social and political conscience of the Egyptians? How did the Egyptian intelligentsia and literate public react to their first direct encounter with Western civilization? To answer these questions we have to make a close study of the works of some of the most prominent leaders in the Westernization of Egyptian thought. As we have already pointed out, these leaders should not be exclusively classified as Westernizers, since we find their works equally expressive of strong impulses of patriotism and of a compelling wish for the reformation of Islam. But in so far as they acted as pioneers of reform, their association with Westernization should be regarded as the dominant fact in their careers.

The works of Rifā'ah Rāfi' at Ṭaḥṭāwī, the Egyptian educationalist of the early nineteenth century, provide instructive evidence of the first reactions of the more enlightened and ambitious Egyptians of this period to the challenge of the West. As an educationalist, Ṭaḥṭāwī had great influence on the younger generation of his time. After serving as a teacher of the University of Al Azhar and as an Imam and preacher to one of Muhammad 'Alī's regiments, he was sent to France as one of the first student mission ever to visit that country; there he specialised in the art of translation, and he read Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu and

---

<sup>1</sup>Heyworth-Dunne, pp. 154, 375-381, 395-405.

Racine. He was, from an Egyptian point of view,<sup>1</sup> the most successful of that first batch of students. On his return to Egypt he was appointed chief translator in the School of Medicine and later in the Military School at Tura, where he translated several books on military science and engineering. In 1836 he set up, under Muhammad 'Alī's sponsorship, the School of Translation, later renamed the School of Languages, which, by teaching European languages, history and French and Islamic laws, did a great deal to Westernize the content of Egyptian higher education. He was for some time the editor of waqā'ī' al misriyah, the official Egyptian newspaper.<sup>2</sup> The list of Ṭaḥṭāwī's students contains the names of an impressive array of writers, poets, translators and lawyers.<sup>3</sup>

Before an appreciation is offered of Ṭaḥṭāwī's two important books - important, that is, from our standpoint here - there is a general remark to be made about his work: considering that Ṭaḥṭāwī began his career as a writer shortly after there had been naked aggression by a Western power, and especially when compared with Arab reactions to various later Western encroachments (of which more in the subsequent chapters), the cool and relatively detached description that he gives of Western excellences is most impressive. Even when voicing indignation against Western material-

---

<sup>1</sup> Heyworth-Dunne, op.cit., p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Jurjī Zaidān, bunāt an nahdjt al 'arabiyah, dār al hilāl, Cairo, 1956. pp. 130-131.

<sup>3</sup> Heyworth-Dunne, op.cit., pp. 264-269.

ism and hedonism his language is distinctly reticent. In contrast to some of the Arab nationalists, and even reformists, of only a decade later, he is not afraid to impress upon his reader the revitalising effect which a knowledge of Western achievements could exert upon the Islamic world. "I implore Almighty God," he writes in the introduction to takhlīs al ibrīz fī talkhīḥ bārīz on his visit to Paris, "that this book may awaken all the Muslim peoples, Arab or non-Arabs, from their slumber of unawareness". He lashes out at these Islamic thinkers who would regard it as shameful for the Muslim peoples to struggle to keep abreast of Western scientific and technical advances and would, therefore, condemn Muḥammad 'Alī's programme of Westernization:

"The Benefactor (referring to Muḥammad 'Alī) has hastened to develop his country, by calling in as many Western scientists as he has been able to, and by dispatching as many (students) to the Western countries as he has found possible, since Western scientists are superior to their counterparts in other lands in the field of knowledge.... 'Take the pearl from the sea' said Ptolemy the Second 'perfume from musk, gold from stone and wisdom from he who declares it.' And a prophetic tradition says: 'Seek knowledge, even if it is in China'. As evidently the Chinese are idolaters, the tradition merely intends to exhort people to travel in pursuit of knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

This is a straightforward call for the abandoning of all prejudice and diffidence in learning from the West. But since Ṭaḥṭāwī was well aware that such pleadings could touch no responsive chords in the hearts of Muslims so long as the Muslims were a prey to self-complacency, he

---

<sup>1</sup> Rafī'ah Rāfī' at Ṭaḥṭāwī, takhlīs al ibrīz fī talkhīḥ bārīz, Dar at Tibā' at 'al Amīrah, Cairo, 1848, p. 9.

set out, with commendable courage, to highlight the Muslims' backwardness as compared with Europeans. This he did in takhlīs either by an express or implied juxtaposing of the Egyptian and French ways of life - over a wide field ranging from bodily cleanliness,<sup>1</sup> eating,<sup>2</sup> drinking,<sup>3</sup> recreation,<sup>4</sup> homosexuality<sup>5</sup> to government<sup>6</sup> and the sciences<sup>7</sup> - or, what is more significant and interesting, through his most telling allusions to Islam's shrinking stature. By poking fun at those who, having at one time claimed that the palm tree could only be found in Muslim lands, had then been discredited by the discovery of America<sup>8</sup> the writer is concerning himself to shake the conservatives' belief in the infallibility of Muslim orthodoxy.

We are all aware of the anomalous status of the term 'ulama' in the language of the Arabs and other Muslim peoples. Literally the term means "learned men" and can therefore be equally applicable to all people possessing a high degree of knowledge. But up to the end of the nineteenth century the sciences in the Muslim countries fell within the purview of religion

<sup>1</sup> Tahṭawī, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 71, et seq.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 102, et seq.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

and the term 'ulamā' came, therefore, to be applied exclusively to the Muslim priesthood. Ṭaḥṭāwī conveys a sharp criticism of this anomaly by pointing to the laicized condition of science in France.

"Do not think," he says, "that the French scientists are priests, as the priests are only the religious doctors, and there are some priests who are also scientists; (there) the term scientist is applied to people who have knowledge of rational ('naqlīyah) science; and the scientists know indeed very little about the details of Christian jurisprudence. So when somebody is said to be a scientist ('alim) in France, he is taken to be, not as a man with religious knowledge, but as somebody who is well-versed in other branches of science. And there becomes evident to you the reason for the Christians' excellence over others in the field of knowledge and thus you realize the reason for our countries' poverty in the sciences. (The reason is that) the University of al Azhar in Cairo, the University of Banī Umayyah in Syria, the University of Zaytūnah in Tunisia etc. are all thriving on the transmitted sciences (naqlīyah) and some rational sciences such as the Arabic studies, logic and so forth."<sup>1</sup>

Ṭaḥṭāwī's responsiveness to nearly all aspects of French life and culture, except where in flagrant contradiction to Islamic rulings, seems to have been total. It was in fact his reputation as an apostle of French culture that gave occasion for his exile to Khartoum under 'Abbās I (1849-54), as part of the latter's campaign of 'purging' the Egyptian cultural and educational system of French influence. But he always took care to justify his Franceophile leanings by insisting on the superiority of the French to other Christian peoples.<sup>2</sup> Even when speaking about French wine-drinking habits he sounds an apologetic note in stressing the limitations

---

<sup>1</sup> Ṭaḥṭāwī, op. cit., p.133.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

within which the French have indulged in them and by reminding his possible Muslim critics that there are fewer words for wine in French than in Arabic.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, what Ṭahṭāwī is pleading for is not an outright Westernization in the sense of a clean break with Muslim tradition.

Takhlīs is packed with nostalgic references to the glorious days of Islamic predominance<sup>2</sup> and with expressions of the writer's strong religious convictions;<sup>3</sup> to avert the accusations and anathemas of the heresy-hunters the book accompanies its appeal for Westernization with the significant suggestion that the Christians' ascendancy in the world is due, "not to their being Christians", but to their advances in the sciences.<sup>4</sup> What he therefore is envisaging is the grafting of Western values on to the trunk of Muslim traditions and Muslim life.

In his more serious but less original marāhiḥ al albāb al miṣriyah fī mābāhiḥ al adāb al 'asriyah, which was published twenty years after the takhlīs, one detects in the writer's thought a growing movement towards laicism, although no explicit plea for this can be anywhere found in the

<sup>1</sup> Ṭahṭāwī, op.cit., p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 8. A more eloquent evidence of Ṭahṭāwī's dedication to Islam is provided, besides his distinguished career at Al Azhar both as a student and a teacher, by his voluminous history of the people of Hijāz, entitled 'nihāyat' al iḥās fī sirat sakin al hijāz (matba' & madāris al miṣriyah, Cairo, 1874) with special reference to the life of Muḥammad and the rise of Islam.

<sup>3</sup> Inter alia: the writer's singular classification of the continents of the world, according to which the place of each continent is determined by its association with, or contribution to Islam, can be regarded as an indication of his religious feelings, if not as a sop to the critics of his pre-Western and, in fact, pre-French, views. He holds that Asia should come at the top of all continents, thanks to its cultivation of Islam, while America should go right to the bottom as "Islam has been totally absent from there". (Ibid., p. 19.)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

book. Contrary to takhlīs, which deals mainly, if not wholly, with the outward manifestations of Western advances, manāhij, apart from the account it gives of the growth of civilization, is concerned with such fundamental and general issues as the rights of the individual as such and the machinery of government; in analysing such a Western institution as constitutional monarchy he commonly treats it not specifically as an achievement of Western culture, but simply as such a general humane ideal as is aspired to by every nation which is striving for progress and prosperity. Thus he maintains that the necessity of dividing the people into ruler and ruled and of distinguishing between the legislative, judicial and executive powers of the state are merely "the dictates of religion". He is perhaps the first Arab writer of his period to supply the educated reader with a résumé of Montesquieu's ideas on the system of government. Two points of criticism have, however, to be made: first, he does not trouble to explain away the contradiction existing between these ideas and the principles of Islamic rule; second, in keeping with his humanist interpretation of Western values, he does not, in speaking about the separation of powers, so much as mention the name of Montesquieu. It is almost as if this idea had represented his own discovery of a political panacea for the Muslims' plight.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This silence assumes some significance in the context of the controversy over Ṭaḥṭāwī's translation from Montesquieu. Shāyḡāl, a contemporary biographer of Ṭaḥṭāwī, writes that he read l'Esprit des Lois while he was staying in France. But, contrary to other chroniclers and biographers, he does not think that Ṭaḥṭāwī had translated any of Montesquieu's works, although he admits that manāhij was deeply affected by l'Esprit des Lois. The origin of the controversy seems to have been a verse by Ṭaḥṭāwī in which he names Montesquieu and Malte Brun as witnesses to his translations.



He puts the political education of the individual on a par with his religious instruction in necessity and importance - a view which, to many a conservative mind of his time, must have sounded as the product of a breath-taking audacity!

"It is customary," he says, "in the Muslim countries to teach the Koran to children before instructing them in professions (or industries, sana' 1). There is no harm in doing this by itself (la ba's bihi fi haddi zatih). But these countries neglect the teaching of the principles of state politics, which constitute (the basis of) public sovereignty. The instruction of these principles is consonant with public interests.- It would not be difficult to appoint in each town a teacher who should instruct the children, after their completion of the Koran and the rudiments of the Arabic language, in the principles of political and administrative affairs, and apprise them of the benefits which good policy and good administration can accrue to the whole of the population."<sup>1</sup>

What further exemplifies the laicized and Westernized quality of the writer's thought, apart from his detailed accounts of some of the periods of European history<sup>2</sup> or his repeated quoting of Napoleon on Egypt's vast natural resources,<sup>3</sup> is his appeal for the suppressing of

---

(cont.) ...

(Cf. Jamal ad Din Muhammad ash Shaiyāl, Rifa'ah at-Tahṭawī, 'aza'im an-nahdat al-fikriyah fi misr Muhammad 'Alī, a'lam al-Islam, ? Cairo, 1947, pp. 23, 90, 91 and 92.)

<sup>1</sup> manāhiḥ al albāb al miṣriyah fī maḥāliḥ Nādab al 'asriyah, Cairo, 1869; p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> In the introduction of manāhiḥ Tahṭawī admits that he has translated the bulk of the chapters on European history from the French books.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 149 and 190.

religious prejudice and fanaticism<sup>1</sup>, and his advocacy of innovation (bid'ah) as the basis of all progress. His plea on this last point he relegates to the end of the book, perhaps so as to leave a more enduring impression on the mind of the reader.

"All the invention of our age," he writes, "are but the noblest products of (human) minds which have inherited knowledge from each other and presented it to the succeeding generation in a form more elaborate than its preceding one. We should not therefore deprecate every bid'ah, as it is more often than not useful."<sup>2</sup>

His plea in favour of bid'ah is connected with his admission of the gaps in Islamic fiqh (jurisprudence) in regard to matters of public welfare, especially commerce:

"The (contents of the) books of religious law (shari'ah) correspond with the events and developments in theory, but they do not do so in practice as they should. The intermingling and transactions between European traders and the Eastern peoples have therefore led to new legislations and the emergence of new courts which try to settle the disputes between the citizens and foreigners mostly on the basis of European laws."

<sup>1</sup> Tahṭāwī applies the famous Koranic verse "inna ma' muninūna ikhwāh" (only the faithful are brethren - Koran, 49: 10) not only to the Muslims of Egypt but to the whole of her citizens, irrespective of religious differences. (Ibid., pp. 66-67.) He regards religious prejudice as the cause of national disunity (p. 269).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 292. One should not underestimate Tahṭāwī's courageous, if not exhaustive, approach to the problem of bid'ah especially if one recalls the sinister echo which the mere term invokes in the mind of the orthodox. As Cantwell Smith writes, bid'ah is the Muslims' counterpart to the Christians' intellectual concept of 'heresy' (Islam in Modern History, p. 20).

Manāhī is perhaps the first printed book which sets out to familiarize its readers with such Western notions as homeland (watan) and patriotism (wataniyah).<sup>1</sup> And patriotism seems in fact to be one of the main messages of Ṭaḥṭāwī for the younger generation of his time.

Ṭaḥṭāwī should undoubtedly be regarded as the foremost Arab champion of the cause of Westernization in its most progressive cultural, educational and administrative aspects. Although his modernizing zeal was tempered with a strong devotion to Egyptian, rather than to Arab nationalism, he made a weighty contribution toward the Arab awakening by drawing the attention of his Arab/Muslim public to their appalling material and spiritual stagnation in contrast to the growing prosperity of the West. Thus, it is not surprising that he should have incurred the hostility of some Azharite dogmatists.<sup>2</sup>

\_\_\_\_\_

Whether following Ṭaḥṭāwī's footsteps or merely spurred by their own observations of the social and political institutions of the West, a

---

<sup>1</sup> Shaiyāl, op. cit., p. 85. Also p. 118 ibid.

<sup>2</sup> "...Rifa'ah may have been opposed by certain bigoted shaikhs of al Azhar, who probably considered that he was trespassing on their domain in the teaching of religious law and theology..... Delatre, who visited the school administered by Rifa'ah under Said, states that his colleagues detested him." (Heyworth Dunne, op. cit., p. 297.)

number of other outstanding Egyptian and Syrian intellectuals now took up the call for Westernization as part of their patriotic struggle against internal oppression and external menace. In this task they were indirectly aided by Western expansionism. The increasingly irresistible pressure of French and British imperialists from the reign of Muhammad Saïd Pasha (1854) onwards, marked by the granting in 1856 to Ferdinand de Lesseps of a concession for the construction of the Suez Canal and of other less important concessions to the British (the Eastern Telegraph Company and the Bank of Egypt) - accentuated by the activities of various European inquiry commissions culminating in the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 - served to produce in Egypt two currents of thought: firstly, by quickening the pace of Westernization, especially under Isma'îl Pasha (1863-1879), and thereby facilitating contact between Egyptians and Europeans, it made for the increased sophistication of the literate elite; secondly, by enraging the populace against the "Christian oppressors", it prepared the ground for the emergence of anti-Westernism as one of the salient characteristics of Egyptian nationalist ideology. In fact, the first current gave rise to the second, providing it with means of self-expression. If the French aggression of half a century earlier had not occasioned so articulate and concrete a movement against the West, this was because the patriotic resentment which it generated was of an amorphous nature and had no opportunity to declare itself. The situation was different in the mid and late nineteenth century, when a sizable intelligentsia in Egypt was able to censure

the West in the languages of Rousseau, Voltaire and Mill. At that embryonic stage anti-Westernism was, however, naturally concentrated against Britain, as the power whose encroachments were the most recent in nationalist memory; France escaped, both because of the pro-French leanings of the nationalist leaders and because of the diplomatic strategy of playing her off against Britain.

The rise of journalism as, in this period, the most effective means of Egyptian self-expression, seems to have been one of the chief by-products of the Westernizing process. Acting as a major contributory factor towards its emergence was the encouragement Isma'īl Pasha gave to opposition and criticism under his reign in the hope of being able to use them as a bargaining counter in his dealings with the Western financiers. Of no less significance was the beginning of "the invasion of Egypt by Christian Syrians",<sup>1</sup> mostly writers and intellectuals who had escaped Ottoman censorship, <sup>and</sup> who gave an unprecedented impulse to Egyptian journalism; this 'invasion', which reached its height towards the end of the nineteenth century, was paradoxically the climax to the growth of an enlightened and Westernized elite in Syria. But, of this Syrian awakening, more later.

There is perhaps no better representative of Westernized journalism at this stage than the Jewish Ya'qūb ibn Rafā'ī Sannū', known as James

---

<sup>1</sup> Martin Hartmann, The Arabic Press of Egypt, Luzac, London, 1899, p. 3. See also Richard Hartmann, Islam und Nationalismus, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1948, pp. 29-30.

Ṣanūa, who lived during one of the most impressionable phases in the history of modern Egyptian thought.<sup>1</sup> Although reckoned as a publicist and a "secondary figure in the nationalist hierarchy"<sup>2</sup> he made, through his lectures, articles, plays and especially through his famous journal Abū Nazzarah (naddāra), a profound impression on the disgruntled strata of the middle class. Being the son of an Italian mother, and having made his studies in Egypt and Italy and having been brought up in both Jewish and Muslim traditions, he developed a deep appreciation of French culture and a steadfast attachment to Muslim traditions. His two secret societies, Amis de la Science and Le Cercle des Progressistes, did a great deal in propagating new ideas among the army officers, the 'ulama' and the students of the University of Azhar. He was among the initiators of that saving, Western-styled tradition which enabled the Egyptian masses to translate their vague, inarticulate disgruntlement into concrete, straightforward demands.

In 1878, after publishing a series of articles aimed against the corrupt administration and the growing British interference in Egyptian affairs, he was sent into exile, whereupon he went to Paris where he remained until the year of his death. Ṣannū's activities in Paris are all

---

<sup>1</sup>The contribution of the Egyptian Jews to the political and social development of Egypt is one of the interesting aspects of Arab-Jewish relations. Any generalizations, however, should be avoided in discussing this contribution. It was mainly under the liberal rule of the Fatimids (969-117) that the Jews attained the highest government posts, while retaining their religion. (S. D. Goitein, Jews and Arabs, Schocken Books Inc., New York, 1955, p. 82., also p. 70.)

<sup>2</sup>Irene L. Gendzier, "James Ṣanūa and Egyptian Nationalism," in The Middle East Journal, Washington, Winter 1961, p. 17.

marked by a passionate admiration for France, even to the point of his supporting her colonial policy. Part of this admiration could no doubt be explained away as the compliment paid by a respected alien to the country whose hospitality he was enjoying. But part should also be ascribed to his genuine belief in French philanthropism. In an endeavour to contribute to the understanding between the Muslims and the French he delivered in Paris a number of lectures outlining the traditional ties of friendship between their countries. Worth noting is the following report by Figaro on his lectures (quoted in one of his journals in Paris called l'Almonsef (al munsif)):

"Le cheikh Abou-Naddara a fait hier au Trocadéro, une conférence en langue arabe sur l'histoire de France et son amitié séculaire pour les nations orientales. Il a parlé des relations cordiales entre Charlemagne et Haroun-al-Rachid, François I<sup>er</sup> et Bajazet, Napoléon III et Abd-al-Majid et le Président de la République française et le Sultan Abdul Hamid.... L'auditoire ... a chaleureusement applaudi le conférencier et la musique des Théâtre d'Egypte a joué 'la Marseillaise arabe' au milieu des cris de 'vivent la France and ses colonies!' .....

In Sannū's other journal in Paris, called l'Attawaded (at tawaddud, friendship), which appeared before al munsif, the same pro-French feelings are reflected. A drawing appearing under the title-heading of the paper shows a Muslim, presumably an Egyptian, shaking hands with a Frenchman. l'Attawaded was published both in French and Arabic; on the third

---

<sup>1</sup> al munsif, 28 July 1900. "I was delighted," he said in one of his Paris lectures on his visit to North Africa, "to know that all French colonies are enjoying security and prosperity." (husn al ishahah fi musammarat abi nazzarah, Cairo, 1910, pp.16-17)

page there was always a column in Persian devoted to the Persian problem and full of the praises of Nāṣir-īd-Dīn, the then Shah of Persia. This column was intended to reflect the paper's concern with the whole of the Islamic world.

Ṣannū's love for the French was matched by his abhorrence of British imperialism.<sup>2</sup> This abhorrence was excited especially by the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. In order to give greater scope to their denouncing of British imperialism, Ṣannū's journals in Paris concerned themselves not only with issues of Angle-Egyptian relations, but also with such crises as the Boer War.<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy that one of these journals, al waṭaṇī al miṣrī (The Egyptian Patriot), two issues only of which appeared in Paris shortly after the British occupation of Egypt carries also an English translation of some of the articles. A letter published in this journal, addressed to him by a "secret patriotic society" in Egypt, throws some light on Ṣannū's departure from his usual practice of publishing his journals in Arabic and French.

---

<sup>1</sup> e.g. at tawaddud, June 20, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> See at tawaddud of October 15, 1900, the cartoon strip of al munsif, 20 November 1900, and the front page of an undated issue of at tawaddud printed in Ibrāhīm 'Abduh's abu nazzarah, imam al as sihafat' al fukahiyat al mussawarah wa zaim al masrah fi miṣr, Cairo, 1953, p. 201.

<sup>3</sup> al munsif, November 20, 1900.



"Our overwhelming plight," so ran the letter, "is totally unknown to the people of Europe; it behoves you therefore to publish a political newspaper with an English translation of its most momentous contents. The English translation would be meant to explain our position to the British people, because today many a lover of humanity and justice can be found among the British."

But love for the French and hatred against the British were not, of course, the only things Ṣannū' was able to offer to his audience. He was a staunch supporter of religious tolerānce. This was due to his mixed Jewish-Christian-Arab background; he equally admired the Koran and the Bible. Ṣannū' was perhaps one of the first protagonists of Arab unity. "My love," he said in one of his earlier lectures in Paris, "for all of you is one in my heart. Because all the sons of the maghrib, of Algeria, of Tunisia, of Tripolitania, of Egypt and of Syria are presumably united by the Arabic language, thus forming one noble nation."<sup>2</sup> These appeals for unity, when set against his ideas of religious liberalism, catholic Islamism, and oriental brotherhood, provide us with the prototypes of that self-contradiction which, as will be adumbrated in the consequent chapters, was to become one of the characteristics of modern Arab political thought.

The British occupation of Egypt in 1882 completed a process which was referred to above as "the emergence of anti-Westernism as one of the main characteristics of nationalist ideology in Egypt". The occupation was all the more resented in Egypt as being accompanied by the crushing

<sup>1</sup> Ibrāhīm Ābdūh, op. cit., p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> ḥusn al ishārah, p. 5.

of the nationalist revolt of Ahmad 'Arabi Pasha (1879-1882), a revolt which had as its aims the self-assertion of the Egyptians against foreign intervention, the establishment of a democratic form of government and the curtailment of the powers of corrupt and irresponsible rulers.<sup>1</sup> The symbolic aspect of that particular episode was even more significant than its immediate concrete implications: Britain was, for the first time, identified in the nationalist mind with all the obstacles that beset the way of the national salvation.<sup>2</sup>

None the less, at the purely spiritual level of Egyptian life, the British occupation had a definitely positive effect - it emboldened the Westernizers, after a short period of retreat in the face of Afghānī, 'Abduh and others, to intensify their efforts both in disseminating the specifically Western modes of thought and in fighting against the degmatism of the traditionalists.

A remarkable representative of that audacious spirit of Westernization - in the scientific field - was Dr. Shibli ash Shumayil, a Syrian who is closely identified by many critics with the journal al muqtataf, one of the leading organs of laic thought in Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century,<sup>3</sup> under the leadership of Ya'qub ṣarrūf (1852-1927)

---

<sup>1</sup>John Marlowe, Anglo-Egyptian Relations (1800-1953), op.cit., pp. 112-13.  
Jean et Simone Lacouture, l'Egypte en Mouvement, Edition du Seuil, Paris, 1956, p. 55 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>John Marlowe, op.cit., p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Jacques Berque, Les Arabes d'Hier à Demain, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1960, p. 252.

He also founded in 1886 the monthly journal ash shifā', a periodical of medicine, surgery, science and practice.<sup>1</sup> The journal which, in fact, migrated from Beirut to Cairo in 1889, concerned itself mainly with the technical aspect of modernity - a position somewhat opposite to that of Zaidān's al hilāl, which largely concentrated on its literary orientation. Shumayil published a collection of his principal articles in 1910, and shocked the Egyptian elite - not by what Jacques Berque calls his enthousiasme scientiste et positiviste - but rather by his open denunciation of religion. His poem ar ruhbān enjoins Man to integrate himself in terrestrial Nature. He finishes the poem on an optimistic note of laic modernism: "Compare the religious centuries with ours: they were far worse". This was a revolutionary position, not only with regard to the men of Al Azhar, but also to the tenets of that "bourgeois liberalism of the 'honest man', recipient of the West but loyal to the East, represented ever since that time by such people as Ahmad Zakī, Ahmad Luṭfī As Sayid, Ṭahā Ḥusain, Tawfiq al Ḥakīm and many others".<sup>2</sup> Another collection of Shumayil's works, published in 1912 under the title of Vues du Dr. Chibli Chumayyel, reveals an outlook based on Spencerian Organicism. Every religion, he says, is a social phenomenon and, like every other social phenomenon, is open to observation and criticism. A vertiginous evolution

<sup>1</sup> Martin Hartmann, op.cit., p. 37. Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism, Oxford University Press, London, 1960, pp. 32-33.

<sup>2</sup> Berque, op.cit., p. 252.

has engulfed all the Arab countries. This evolution "has triumphed in (the fields of) the abstract, of oratory and of the imaginary. But if we want to appreciate the progress effected in the concrete (world), we must equip ourselves with the microscope". He ascribes the Arabs' backwardness in the sciences to "the imperialism of belles-lettres". He is against all humanism based on a pious and erudite reference to the past. It was such 'unorthodox even to the unorthodox' views which prompted Shumayil's adopted son, Gabriel Bulad, after the latter's death in 1916, to offer himself as "the expiatory victim" of the "terrible responsibility" assumed by his father's soul.<sup>1</sup>

A less extremist and more synthetic attitude towards modernism was left to be championed and delineated by Tāhā Ḥusain, "the most philosophical and most aggressive educational reformer and probably the leading scholar - litterateur of the Arab world".<sup>2</sup> After completing his primary education in a school in Upper Egypt he entered the Azhar University, but there his independence of mind earned for him the anger of the Azharite leaders, who eventually expelled him from the University.. He then entered the new Egyptian University where he studied under Professor Nallino, the Italian Orientalist, and also under "the eminent German scholar", Professor Enno Littman of Tübingen, and Professor Santillana. In recognition of his brilliant work he was sent to France, where he studied three

---

<sup>1</sup>Berque, op.cit., p.253.

<sup>2</sup>G. E. Von Grunebaum "Attempts at Self-Interpretation in Contemporary Islam", in Islam, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1955, p. 209.

years in the Sorbonne, attended the lectures of Casanova in the College de France and was awarded his doctorate.<sup>1</sup>

Ḥusain's numerous books and articles reflect his two-pronged reformism: fierce opposition to orthodox dogmatism, especially in the literary field as represented by his highly controversial book fi'l adab al jahillī (1926) on the Arabic poetry of the pre-Islamic period,<sup>2</sup> and his persistent call for thorough Westernization of the Egyptian educational system, as propounded in his book mustaqbal ath thaqāfah fī misr (1937) on the future of culture in Egypt. It is the latter book which most concerns us here, in that it puts forward a novel argument in defence of Westernization in Egypt. This argument is that Egypt should adopt Western modes of thought and living, not because she needs them - as previous writers had contended - but because she is part of Europe.

As explained by Ḥusain himself, it was the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of alliance of 1936, guaranteeing Egypt's independence, and the convention of Montreux (1937), abolishing the capitulations, which prompted him to write the book. He had been equally inspired by his attending the Conference of the National Committee for Intellectual Cooperation in Paris in 1936, during which he went to classes and lectures, each of them dealing with some aspect of culture. What he saw and heard "stimulated a flow of ideas, feelings and hopes that simply had to be recorded".<sup>3</sup> One of the most in-

<sup>1</sup> C. C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, Oxford University Press, London, 1933, pp 254.

<sup>2</sup> fi'l adab al jahillī, dār al ma'arif bi misr, Cairo, 1927, see especially pp. 7-62.

<sup>3</sup> mustaqbal ath thaqāfah fī misr, maṭba' al ma'arif, Cairo, 1947, p.6. We have also used Sidney Glazer's translation, The Future of Culture in Egypt, American Council of Learned Societies, Washington, 1954.

interesting features of the book is its discussion of the position of Egypt between the East and the West. "Is Egypt," he asks at the beginning of the book, "of the East or of the West?"<sup>1</sup> And, of course, in speaking of East and West he is using these terms in their cultural, rather than geographical, senses. "The contacts between ancient Egypt," he replies, as to Egypt's position with regard to the East, "and the lands of the East scarcely went beyond Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia, that is, the East that falls in the Mediterranean basin, but there is no doubt that they were strong and continuous and that they exerted an influence on the intellectual, political and economic life of all the countries concerned".<sup>2</sup> As regards Egypt's relationship with the West, he sounds more convinced and self-righteous:

"It would be a waste of time and effort to set forth in detail the ties binding Egypt to the ancient Graeco-Aegean civilization. School children know that Greek colonies were established in Egypt by the Pharaohs before the first millenium B.C. They also know that an Eastern nation, Persia, successfully invaded our country at the end of the sixth century B.C."<sup>3</sup>

But with the help of the Greek volunteers and the Greek cities the Egyptians repelled the Persian invasion. The point of these observations is this: the Egyptian mind had no significant ties with the Far East and with Persia its relations were those of hostility. Its real ties were all with the Near East and with the Greeks. In so far as the Egyptian

<sup>1</sup> Mustaqbal, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

mind was affected by any outside influence at all, this influence was Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, continues the writer, the fact that some Egyptians regard themselves "as being closer to the Hindus, Chinese and Japanese than to the Greeks, Italians and Frenchmen" seems to him "a shocking misconception".<sup>2</sup> Taha Husain then tries to elucidate another aspect of Egypt's affinity with Europe by emphasizing the distinction which Muslims, like Europeans, draw between state and religion - a follow-up of the arguments forcefully left incomplete by 'Abd ar Raziq.<sup>3</sup>

"From earliest times," he says, "Muslims have been well aware of the now universally acknowledged principle that a political system and a religion are different things.... This is definitely applicable to the Europeans who, when relieved of the burdens of the Middle Ages, organized their respective governments in accordance with temporal considerations, not Christian unity or linguistic or racial similarity."<sup>4</sup>

Did Egypt's adoption of Islam make her an Eastern nation? "Kala, not at all!"<sup>5</sup> he replies. Europe did not become Eastern nor did the nature of the European mind change because Christianity, which originated in the East, flooded Europe and absorbed the other religions. Besides, there is no fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity as both "were born in the geographical East, both issued from one noble source and were inspired by the one God in whom Easterners and Westerners alike believe!"<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mustaqbal, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Infra, p. 119 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Mustaqbal, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

Islam and Christianity came to resemble each other in another way. Christianity influenced, and was influenced by, Greek philosophy before the rise of Islam. Philosophy became Christian and Christianity became philosophical. The same thing happened when Islam came into contact with Greek philosophy. Philosophy became Muslim and Islam became philosophical.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore:

"We Egyptians," says Ṭahā Ḥusain, "must not assume the existence of intellectual differences, weak or strong between the European and ourselves or infer that the East mentioned by Kipling in his famous verse 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet', applies to us or our country. Ismā'īl's (1863-1879) statement that Egypt is a part of Europe should not be regarded as some kind of boast or exaggeration, since our country has always been a part of Europe as far as intellectual and cultural life is concerned, in all its forms and branches."<sup>2</sup>

The writer goes further than this by stating that the elements of the European mind are the same as those of the Islamic mind. Paul Valéry has distinguished three elements in the European mind:

"Greek civilization with its literature, philosophy and art, Roman civilization with its political institutions and jurisprudence, and Christianity with its appeal for charity and its exhortation to good works".<sup>3</sup>

An analysis of the Muslim mind in Egypt will yield comparable results: a literary, philosophical and artistic component essentially related to

---

<sup>1</sup> Mustaqbal, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 29.



Greek civilization and a politico-judicial component very much akin to the Roman system. As regards Islam, it has already been stated that there is a great deal in common between this religion and Christianity.

Ṭāhā Ḥusain then sets out to explain the impact of the West on the various aspects of the Egyptian life - on her spiritual activities, government, system of communication and economy. But that is not enough. The Egyptians must become equal partners in civilization with the Europeans, "must share with them the present civilization, with all its pleasant and unpleasant sides",<sup>1</sup> and more important, should unequivocally express their respect for the Western civilization. "If we genuinely respect the Europeans," he writes, "why do we not reconcile our words with our actions". One department of the Egyptian life in particular, says the writer, has so far escaped the Western impact: this is the Azhar University which "has been in a serious condition since before the time of Ismā'īl".<sup>2</sup> Ḥusain seizes on every opportunity to censure the stubbornness of the Azharites to adapt themselves to the changing circumstances, whether it be his objection to the Azhar's refusal to subject its institution to the government supervision,<sup>3</sup> its monopoly for teaching the Arabic language,<sup>4</sup> or its opposition to the unification of the various educational institutions of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Mustaqbal, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 34 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

country.<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that, since the publication of Mustaqbal, although Husain has retreated from some of his previous opinions, including the concept of Egypt as essentially of the West, in favour of viewing her rather as a link between East and West,<sup>2</sup> he has invariably remained critical towards the traditionalists. In one of his recent books, naqd wa islah, a collection of essays on criticism and reform, he attacks the Asharite shaikhs and recommends the unification of religious and laic forms of education in Egypt as complementary to the unification of the country's legal system through the abolition of the religious courts.<sup>3</sup>

Although Husain is so solidly for the Westernization of Egypt, he is opposed to her being independent on the culture of any particular country of the West.<sup>4</sup> He especially deprecates the Anglicization of the Egyptian culture, attempted ever since the British Occupation, through sending more and more students to Britain and activities of such cultural propaganda organisations as the British Institute.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, his repeated reference to the various French cultural, educational and administrative ex-

<sup>1</sup> Mustaqbal, p. 77 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Grunebaum, op.cit., p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> ḥāḥa Husain, naqd wa islah, dār al 'ilm li'l Malā'īn, Beirut, 1956, p. 244 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Mustaqbal, p. 199 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> From 1882 to 1919, while 231 students were sent to England, only 57 were sent to France. Between 1919 and 1936, the same ratio was almost retained with 1,000 students being sent to England and 229 to France. (Quoted in Raoul Makarius' La Jeunesse Intellectuelle d'Egypte au Lendemain de la Deuxieme Guerre Mondiale, Mouton & Co. Paris, 1960, p. 83.)

cellences indicate his Franceophile leanings - a contradiction to his desire to have Egypt imbibing Western culture as a whole, rather than falling under the spell of a particular Western culture.

It can be fairly said that, as far as the contemporary history of Egypt is concerned, Ṭāhā Ḥusain has said the last word about the basic problems raised by his country's relationship with the West. Ḥusain's views on Egypt's close ties with Europe, rather than with the Orient, have found their echo in the works of a number of Egyptian intellectuals and writers such as Salāma Mūsā and Tawfiq al Ḥakīm. The former, while asserting that Egypt belongs to Europe, goes so far as to regret the fact that "Asiatic blood" should run in the veins of the Egyptians. The latter glorifies his nation as the descendants of "pyramid-builders".

We cannot close this chapter without alluding to another important aspect of Westernization in the Arab world: the movement for the emancipation of women. The main leader of this movement in Egypt, Qāsim Amīn, has been thoroughly introduced to Western students.<sup>2</sup> But far less known

<sup>1</sup>Walther Braune, Die Entwicklung des Nationalismus bei den Arabern in R. Hartmann and H. Scheel's Beiträge zur Arabistik, Semitistik und Islamwissenschaft, Otto Harrassowitz, Leipzig, 1944, p. 435 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Islam and Modernism in Egypt, p. 231 et seq. The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism, op.cit., pp. 56, 87, 47-51. Amīn's main book on the Emancipation of Women (tahrir al Mar'ah, Cairo, 1899) has also been translated into German by O. Rescher: qasim amin, tahrir el-mar'ah Stuttgart, 1928.

is the poet Jamil Sīdī az Zahāwī, the initiator of the movement in Iraq and "one of the great renovators that Islam has ever known during recent centuries for his greatness and scandal".<sup>1</sup> In spite of his pious family background - his father was a Muftī - his early life was spent mostly in "the merry-makings of the learned" (frairies doctés), in ceremonies and receptions. He achieved great popularity thanks to his marvellous memory and his sense of poetical improvisation. He was elected as a deputy to 'Abdul Hamīd's parliament where he became one of the first protagonists of Arabism. His visit to Egypt brought him into contact with modernist ideas. This inspired him, after his return to Baghdad, to launch a vigorous campaign for the establishment of a girls' school in Baghdad. He had now become a professor of the Baghdad faculty of law. Despite the governor's attempts at hindering this project by drawing on the anti-feminism of the Ottomans, Zahāwī's efforts succeeded and the first girls' school was founded in Iraq in 1899. Other communities (Christians, Jews etc.) soon took up the idea, and within Zahāwī's lifetime, six to seven girls' schools were set up in Baghdad, in Mossul and in Baḡra. Zahāwī's next move was the publication, in 1905, of a book entitled al fajr aṣ ṣadīq fī ithbāt al khawāriq, which contained a virulent attack on Wahhabism in general and on the rigorous formalism of the Hanbalite sect in particular.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Jacques Berque, op.cit., p. 162.

<sup>2</sup>Louis Massignon, Presse Arabe: "La Question du Voile" in Revue du Monde Musulman, Paris, XII: XI, 1910, p. 466.

But the orthodox and conservative circles, who had been caught somewhat unawares by Zahāwī's offensive on behalf of feminism, soon found an opportunity to empty their vials of wrath on his head. The occasion was provided for them by the publication of a letter by Zahāwī in the Egyptian journal al muayyad, in its issue of July 1910. The article, which was entitled "In Defence of Woman", touched off a storm of controversy both in Egypt and Iraq, and brought a prompt reaction from the enraged 'ulama' of Baghdad who in a body denounced Zahāwī as a zindīq (atheist) and a mubāh ad damm (one whose killing is prescribed by law). Thereupon Zahāwī was deprived of all his official positions. Several unsuccessful attempts were also made on his life.

The central theme of Zahāwī's controversial article is the repudiation of the veil (hiġāb) as a social institution. But there is indeed more to the article than that: Zahāwī makes a sharp criticism, not sometimes without a tinge of sarcasm, of a number of Koranic injunctions on woman - although he does not mention the Koran by name anywhere in the article.

"The Muslim woman," he says, "suffers multiple oppression and injustice. She is oppressed because the right to divorce falls exclusively within the power of the husband. I wonder why they require the consent of woman for her marriage while they do not ask for it for her divorce, which merely restores her previous isolation. She is oppressed because in the heritage of her father and mother she does not receive more than half the share of her brother.<sup>2</sup> She is oppressed because she is worth half a man and her testimony half that of a man."<sup>3</sup> She

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Koran, IV: 39.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ibid., IV: 13.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ibid., II, 282.

is oppressed because her husband can marry three more wives, whereas she can have only him.<sup>1</sup> She is oppressed because she is buried alive under a thick veil which deprives her of the pleasure of sensing the perfume of the breeze and of freely mingling with her likes in order to educate herself together with them in the great school of life."<sup>2</sup>

Finding himself completely isolated after being "excommunicated" by the 'ulamā', Zahāwī went to Beirut, where he was accorded a triumphant welcome. The daughter of the Mayor of Beirut, Julia Ṭū'mi, an ardent feminist and the editor of La Femme Nouvelle, al marat' al jadīd,<sup>3</sup> took advantage of Zahāwī's presence to intensify her campaign. Cairo's welcome was no less enthusiastic. (Controversy over Zahāwī was raging until quite recently. A contemporary Iraqi writer, Mahdī Abbās al 'Abīrī, has accused him of plagiarizing from the works of past masters, both Eastern and Western, such as Abul 'Alā al Mu'arrā, on the hand hand, and Spinoza (1632-1677), Nicolas de Malebranche (1638-1715),<sup>4</sup> Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) and Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931)<sup>5</sup> on the other. The fact that Zahāwī did not know any foreign languages does not, in this critic's view, dismiss the charge of plagiarism, since Zahāwī could gain access to Western literary and philo-

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. The Koran, IV: 4.

<sup>2</sup>Revue du Monde Musulman, op.cit., p. 468.

<sup>3</sup>Yusuf As'ad Dāghir, masādir ad dirāsāt 'al adabīyah, Matābī' Lubnā, Vol. II, Beirut, 1956, p. 369.

<sup>4</sup>Mahdī 'Abbās al 'Abīrī, haqīqat' az Zahāwī, Matba'at 'ar Rashīd, Baghdad, 1947, p. 33.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

sophical works through their Turkish translations.

The feminist movement was, however, given a powerful impulse throughout the Arab countries during the first decade of the twentieth century. The movement sometimes took on a strong literary and poetical colouring and carried the modernization of Arab soul and society a step further. It was thanks to Zabāwī that the first organization of women was created in the Arab world. His sister 'Āṣimah founded in 1924 the jam'iyat' an nahdat' an nisawīyah (The Association of the Female Renaissance). Since then the Arab women have held numerous congresses: in Aley (1929), in Damascus (1930) and in Baghdad (1932). The most important of all seems to have been the Arab Women's Congress of Palestine, held on October 26, 1922 in Jerusalem. The main emphasis of the resolution of the Congress was placed on Arab rights in Palestine but, by its denunciation of the "deliberate violation of all the pledges given to the Arabs before and after the Armistice [of 1918]" as well as by its reference to the sacrifices of the Arabs in general, the Jerusalem Congress should be regarded as the first contribution made by Arab women towards the Arab nationalist movement.<sup>1</sup> The feminist movement was thus turned from an agitation for the emancipation of women into a weapon in the service of Arab unity.

---

<sup>1</sup>Matiel E. T. Mogannam, The Arab Woman, Herbert Joseph Limited, London, 1937, p. 69 et seq.

Until approximately the French occupation of Syria (1920) which put an end - at least temporarily - to all Arab illusions of an outside, i.e. Western, support for Arab unity, the concepts of modernity and Westernization did not represent abstract ideals for the Arab elite. These concepts were mostly identified with the concrete power and civilization of a particular Western country which was therefore recognised, and admired, as the preceptor in the national drive for progress. As was noted in the foregoing pages - and will be further noted in the subsequent chapters - this particular Western country was, for most Arabs, France. We shall see later how this somewhat 'utilitarian' attitude towards modernity gave place to an abstract attitude - an attitude which was based on the separation of the concept of modernity from its actual, concrete instances.

We have also noticed how in the past a number of brilliant Arab minds not only attempted to introduce the most advanced concepts of Western civilization into their countries, but also how courageously - and in certain cases consistently - advocated the necessity of Westernization. The significance of such attempts becomes all the more evident when they are contrasted with the attitude of the latter-day Westernizers: a massive adoption of Westernism without any effort at self-justification.



## II. THE ISLAMIC REVIVALISM

The movement which is designated here as Islamic revivalism and which occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century consisted, on the one hand, of the struggle for the unity of Muslim peoples - a struggle which is usually referred to as Pan-Islamism<sup>1</sup> - and on the other hand, of the Islamic reformation mainly in the sense of a plea for the return to the pure form of Islam as established by the Koran and sound prophetic traditions. Both in substance and form, this revivalism affords ample evidence of profound Western impress. As a positive force it was, in certain respects, reminiscent of Protestantism in medieval Europe. If we accept Professor Gibb's remark that "the expansion of Western civilization into Eastern Europe and Asia took place during the age of the Romantic revival",<sup>2</sup> and if we accept that the liberty of individual thought and imagination, i.e. the essence of European Romanticism, was to a considerable extent inspired by the Protestant defence

---

<sup>1</sup>The term "Pan-Islamism" was first coined by certain adverse Western observers in defining the "agitation" among Muslim peoples for unity and independence. In view of the connotation of fanaticism understood from the term, a number of Western sympathisers of the Muslims at first refused to give currency to the term and even doubted the existence of this agitation. Thus Professor E. G. Browne once described Pan-Islamism as "a mare's nest discovered by the Vienna correspondent of *The Times*". But later on, with the Muslims' struggle assuming conspicuously violent forms, he came to believe that in view of the inevitability of this struggle leading to 'a certain solidarity', "we may, if we choose, speak of a pan-Islamic movement". (E. G. Browne, The Persian Revolution, Cambridge, 1910, p. 1.)

<sup>2</sup>H.A.R. Gibb, Modern Trends in Islam, The University of Chicago Press, 1947, p. 108.

of the "conception of liberty" and "the right of private judgment",<sup>1</sup> then this claim about the 'Protestant' character of the Muslims' movement at the end of the nineteenth century should not be taken as an exaggeration. As a negative force, Islamic revivalism was called into being when the Western assault on Muslim countries seemed to jeopardize the very existence of Islam as a religion.

So much for the substance. As to the form, Islamic revivalism, even in the works of such original leaders of the movement as Afghānī, 'Abduh and Kawākibī, manifested itself in a recognisably Western pattern.

Prior to offering an appreciation of the works of these protagonists of Islamic revivalism we may underline two characteristics of their period as far as the Arab-West relationship is concerned. Firstly, the Franco-ophile and Anglophobe trends in Arab thought continued in this period to colour the bulk of Arab mental activities; love for France persisted for exactly the same reasons as previously stated, and the abhorrence of the British was still further intensified by the occupation of Egypt and its implications. Evidence on this will be produced later. Secondly, in spite of the lingering feelings of sympathy and admiration for France, there prevailed a deep disillusionment with the standards of French culture and education as introduced by Muhammad 'Alī and his successors.

---

<sup>1</sup>Rev. Daniel Dulany Addison, "Protestant Episcopal Church" in The Encyclopedia Britannica, Cambridge, 1911, Vol. XXII, p. 474.

Lord Lloyd gives us a clear picture of the main cause of this disillusionment

"The educational system," he writes, "which existed in Egypt at the commencement of the Occupation was ... in a chaotic condition. The indigenous Mahomedan system, entirely religious in character, had reached a stage of lifeless stagnancy, and nothing short of a vigorous renaissance could restore it. No such revival had been attempted, but side by side and in competition with this system had been introduced a French system of education. Their wisecracks had seen the electric light in the West, and had clamoured blindly for it. Under Egyptian management and upon Egyptian soil, they expected the new installation to function as brilliantly as upon French soil; but the expectation was by no means fulfilled. The result of the new venture was merely to postpone indefinitely the essential reform of the native system."<sup>1</sup>

With these two points in mind we now proceed to view Islamic revivalism mainly in those fields where it has unmistakably drawn inspiration from the West. The analyses effected by C. C. Adams in his study of Islam and Modernism and H. A. R. Gibb in his Modern Trends in Islam make it unnecessary for us to go into any details, especially in regard to 'Abduh; we will therefore concentrate on those Arab-Muslim thinkers whose works have so far been subjected to a less searching scrutiny in the West.

---

The principal protagonists of Pan-Islamism were As Sayid Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī al Ḥusainī and his pupil, Muḥammad 'Abduh. While, as will be seen later, exhaustive analyses have been made by both Arab and Euro-

---

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lloyd, Egypt since Cramer, pp. 157-158.

pean scholars of the life and doctrine of 'Abduh, Afghānī has, very surprisingly, received less attention<sup>1</sup> - though hardly has any account of the contemporary movements of Muslim countries appeared without containing repeated mention of his name. Whether this has been due to Afghānī's meagre literary output or to the low regard in which he has been held, as compared with 'Abduh and Iqbal, by some Western critics,<sup>2</sup> is not clear. But there is no doubt that without some understanding of his ideas, as set out in his scattered articles, lectures and reported conversations, much of the present tenets in Arab nationalism, especially those in regard to the West, cannot be fully understood. In fact, to paraphrase W.C. Smith, there is little in twentieth-century Arab nationalism not foreshadowed in Afghānī. Thus, for instance, in attacking Western imperialism, modern exponents of Arab nationalism borrow their weapons from Afghānī's armoury of religio-political anathemas against Britain. Or, to mention another instance, most of the arguments put forward today in favour of Arab unity are but facsimiles of his pleadings for Muslim unity.

In view of the obscurity shrouding Afghānī's earlier life, he has sometimes been regarded as being of Persian origin. His birthplace, which

---

<sup>1</sup>"An adequate study of Afghānī is still awaited." W.C. Smith, Islam in Modern History, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>"...Jamal ad-Din's sole published work does not by any means suggest a man of such intellectual capacity as Iqbal indicates." (H.A.R. Gibb, Modern Trends in Islam, p. 29.)

is generally known to be As'ad Ābād, in Kanar (Afghanistan), has been reported by his Persian biographers as Asad Ābād, near Hamadān, in Persia. Among others, Nāẓim ul Islām-i-Kirmānī, in his History of the Awakening of the Persians,<sup>1</sup> and Luṭf Ullāh Khān-i-Asad Ābādī, in his short biography of Afghānī,<sup>2</sup> have insisted on his Persian nationality. Luṭf Ullāh Khān claims to be Afghānī's nephew and provides us in his book with a number of genealogical evidences, not of a very convincing nature, on Afghānī's Persian descent.<sup>3</sup> A recent Persian biographer, Murāḍā Muddarāsī Chāhārdahī, has, however, silently dropped the issue in his book entitled The Life and Social and Political Philosophy of Sayid Jamāl ad Dīn Afghānī.<sup>4</sup>

Whichever his nationality the effects of Afghānī's teachings were already felt during his lifetime in practically every part of the Muslim world; in Egypt, for instance, the 'Arabī revolt of 1882 and the rise of modernism are closely identified with his name. When Adams likens Egyptian modernism to the flow of the Nile, "taking its rise from a source beyond the confines of the country",<sup>5</sup> he is in fact alluding to the self-

<sup>1</sup> Nāẓim ul Islām-i-Kirmānī, tārīkh-i-bīdarī-i-Irānīan, (Persian text), Tehran, 1953. (Second edition) p. 66 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Luṭf Ullāh Khān-i-Asad Ābādī, sharḥ-i-hāl va āthar-i-ṣayyid djamal-ud-dīn (sic) asad ābādī ma'rūf bi afghānī (Persian text), p. 144 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 14 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Murāḍā Muddarāsī Chāhārdahī, zindigānī itimā'ī va siyāsī-i-sayid jamāl ad dīn afghānī, (Persian text), eqbal, Tehran, 1955.

<sup>5</sup> Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, p. 18.

same pervasive influence of Afghānī. Equally instrumental was his influence in the agitations which led to the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1906.

Afghānī was born in 1838. After studying the whole range of Muslim sciences, i.e. Arabic grammar, philology, rhetoric, theology, Sufism, logic, philosophy, physics, metaphysics and mathematics, he went to India where he remained for a year and some months "during which time he learned something of the European sciences and their methods".<sup>1</sup> He made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1857; on his way there and back from that sacred city, he seems to have made a thorough study of the conditions of various Muslim peoples. Having returned to Afghanistan, he became actively involved in the intrigues and counter-intrigues of the ruling circles; for some time he aided Dūst Muḥammad Khān, the Amīr of Afghanistan, mainly through the giving of advice and moral support; upon the Amīr's death and the outbreak of the civil war between Shīr 'Alī, the new ruler, and his three brothers, Afghānī threw in his lot with Muḥammad A'zam, one of the three brothers who, after varying fortunes, became Amīr and appointed Afghānī as Prime Minister. The civil war was, however, soon resumed and Shīr 'Alī, through British support, defeated Muḥammad A'zam and caused him to flee the country. Soon after, in 1869, Afghānī left for India.

This short experience in power politics had two enduring effects on

---

<sup>1</sup>E. G. Browne, The Persian Revolution, p.5.

Afghānī's mind. Firstly, it made him an unflinching advocate of Real-politik right up to the end of his life, with no "Micawber-like" illusions in his dealings with governments and ruling circles, whether Muslim or otherwise. Secondly, it afforded a personal and emotional undertone to his anti-British outlook which later came to colour most of his teachings and activities.

After a short stay in India and Egypt, he went to Constantinople where he was well received by 'Alī Pāshā, the Grand Wazir, and six months later, he was chosen a member of the Turkish Council of Education. His stay in Constantinople was also short, as he soon antagonized a large body of the 'ulama'' by delivering a lecture in which his remarks on the organic nature of human society were interpreted in some bigotted orthodox circles as derogatory to the apostolic office and the Prophet.<sup>1</sup> Thereupon he was asked by the Turkish Government to leave Constantinople for a while.

Afghānī's next stop was Cairo, where he arrived in March 1871. There he stayed for eight years, during which time, through giving lectures on a wide range of Islamic sciences and encouraging his students to write articles on various literary, philosophical, religious and political issues, he made the greatest possible contribution to the social and political awakening of that country. Here again his activities soon came into conflict, on the one hand with the interests of the old-fashioned theologians,

---

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Tārīkh al ustādhā al imām, matba'at al manār, 1331, pp. 30-31. E.G. Brown, Persian Revolution, pp. 6-7.

who saw in his encouragement of the study of philosophy a threat to orthodoxy and, on the other, with the British position in Egypt which was being endangered alarmingly by his political agitation. The combined forces of the fanatic 'ulamā' and the British Consul-General led to Afghānī's expulsion from Egypt in September 1879. Thereupon he went to India and took up his abode at Hyderabad<sup>al</sup> in the Deccan, where he found an opportunity to learn some English and to write, in Persian, his only lengthy work, radd bar naicherīyah, or The Refutation of the Materialists.

Meantime the nationalist stirrings in Egypt, to which Afghānī had made such a great contribution, culminated in the 'Arābī' revolt of 1882 and the subsequent occupation of Egypt by Great Britain. The Indian Government, at the behest of the British, placed Afghānī under surveillance in Calcutta until the nationalist movement was completely crushed. Then he was allowed to leave India. Afghānī went to London, remained there for a few days and then left for Paris, where he stayed for three years. Having learned some French,<sup>1</sup> he soon established contact with the French public through publishing political articles in the French Press,

---

<sup>1</sup> Afghānī does not seem to have mastered either French or English, although some of his Arab and Persian admirers claim the opposite. (See, among others, Muḥammad al Makhzūmī's khāṭirāt Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī, maṭba'at al 'ilmīyah, Beirut, 1931, p. 76.) As has been noted by a fairly impartial Persian critic, Afghānī could read in these two languages, but could never speak them faultlessly. (Article by Mirzā Husain Khan Danish Iṣfahānī, in Luṭf Ullāh Khān's sharḥ i hāl, pp. 89-90.)



which "were read and received the closest attention of those European governments which had political interests in Muslim countries, especially Great Britain".<sup>1</sup> But his most outstanding achievement during his stay in Paris was the publication of an Arabic weekly called al 'urwah 'al 'uthmā. The first issue of the weekly appeared on March 13, 1884, and the last in September of the same year. In spite of this short life span and its limited circulation the 'urwah took possession of the minds and hearts of the Muslim intelligentsia to a degree never obtained by a single Arabic journal during the whole of the nineteenth century. It is an indication of the far-reaching influence of this journal among the Muslim masses that its closure was mainly due to the machinations of alarmed British authorities with the French. Those who got hold of its numbers made a point of making manuscript copies of them for further distribution.<sup>2</sup> Afghānī's main collaborator in publishing the 'urwah was Muḥammad 'Abduh. This fact, together with the high standard and pure style of the 'urwah's Arabic, which in the view of some critics is incongruous with Afghānī's Persianised style,<sup>3</sup> has led no less authority than Adams to say that all the articles which appeared in the journal were written by 'Abduh.<sup>4</sup> This does not seem to be wholly true. Although 'Abduh, as editor-in-chief,

---

<sup>1</sup> Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, tarīkh al ustādh al imām, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Mirzā Ḥusain Khān Dānish's article in sharḥ i hāl, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> Adams, op.cit., p. 9.

must have been ultimately responsible for the presentation of many articles, the fact remains that the contents of most of the articles are exclusively characteristic of Afghānī, and not of 'Abduh. The revolutionary stand of 'urwah on the ways and means of liberating Muslim peoples, its rabid attacks on the British and its impatience with the pacifists and conservatives, are quite out of keeping with the general outlook of 'Abduh who, in the words of Adams, "was a reformer" depending "more upon methods of reform and education than upon agitation and revolution".<sup>1</sup> Some of the Arab biographers of Afghānī have, therefore, specifically ascribed a number of 'urwah articles to Afghānī.<sup>2</sup> The aim of 'urwah, as explained in the first issue, was two-fold: to delve into the causes of backwardness of the Eastern peoples in general and of Muslims in particular, and to fight against the spirit of defeatism prevailing among the Muslims.<sup>3</sup> Besides, the 'urwah coined numerous Arabic equivalents for words, phrases and ideas connected with the Western institutions and thus transformed and enriched Arab political terminology.<sup>4</sup> The language of anti-Western polemics in the Arab world today owes a large debt to these innovations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adams, op.cit., p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> See Muḥammad al Makhzūmī's khātirāt, op.cit., p. 292 ff. and Muḥammad Muḥammad 'Abd al Fattāḥ's ashḥar mashāḥir udabā' ash sharq, al maktabata al miṣriyah, vol. II, Cairo (no date), pp. 52-80.

<sup>3</sup> Jamal ad Dīn al Ḥusainī al Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh, al 'urwah 'al wuthūā wa'l thawrat 'l tahririyat' al kubra, Cairo, 1957, pp. 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> Abd al Qādir al Maghribī, Jamal ad Dīn al Afghānī, iqra', No. 68, dar al ma'arif, (? Cairo), pp. 18-19.

After the closure of 'urwah, Afghānī made a short visit to London and then to Moscow. There is much confusion in the accounts of Afghānī's biographers on the next stage of his life.

According to Goldziehr,<sup>1</sup> Afghānī visited Persia in response to a telegraphic invitation from the Shah early in 1886. Browne<sup>2</sup> does not share this view and reports his first official visit to Persia as having taken place in 1889. In that year, while in Munich, on his way to Najd, according to one account,<sup>3</sup> or to the Paris Exhibition, according to another account,<sup>4</sup> Afghānī met Naṣir-i-Dīn, the Shah of Persia, who invited him to become Prime Minister of Persia. He accepted this invitation and, after visiting Russia,<sup>5</sup> went to Persia, not to take up the post of premier but to give advice to the Shah on many a political, legal and administrative problem. In view of Afghānī's growing influence with different classes of people, the Shah soon became alarmed at the prospect of this influence

<sup>1</sup>Article entitled "Djamāl al Dīn al Afghānī", in The Encyclopedia of Islam, London, 1913, p. 1009.

<sup>2</sup>Persian Revolution, pp. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup>Lutf Ullah Khān, sharḥ i hāl, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā, tārīkh al ustādh al imām, p. 55. Adams says (Islam and Modernism in Egypt, p. 10) that Afghānī was in Munich "on a confidential mission for the Shah of Persia", but there does not seem to be any evidence in support of this.

<sup>5</sup>According to a letter which Afghānī later wrote to the Shah of Persia, his stay in Russia was largely devoted to attempts at removing the causes of Russo-Persian strained relations. The letter, which is fully quoted in tārīkh-i-bidārī-i-irānīān (p. 65 et seq) might be regarded from a radical viewpoint as one of the weak points of Afghānī's revolutionary career, packed as it is with flattering compliments to the Shah.

undermining his position. Thereupon, Afghānī's relations with the Shah rapidly deteriorated. Sensing his imminent fall, he again asked for permission to leave Persia, but was refused with discourtesy. Whereupon he sought sanctuary at the shrine of Shāh 'Abd al 'Azīm, near Teheran, and embarked upon a vigorous anti-Shah campaign. This resulted in his expulsion from Persia. After staying for a short while in Baṣra, he made his way to London, mainly to discredit the Shah in the eyes of the British,<sup>1</sup> and then returned to Constantinople, where he spent the rest of his life. Enjoying the high favour of Sulṭān 'Abdul Ḥamīd, he devoted most of his time to the cause of Muslim unity, communicating with the various organisations and personalities of Muslim countries apparently in preparation for an inter-Muslim conference to be held in Constantinople<sup>2</sup> - a fact which has induced a number of historians to regard Pan-Islamism at this stage as but a means of buttressing the Ottoman empire.<sup>3</sup> He could not go very far in accomplishing this task as he was attacked by cancer of the jaw, which finally caused his death on March 9, 1897.

There are three points in Afghānī's thought which should be of interest to us, both because of their subsequent effect on Arab nationalist movement and their own significance as illustrating the Western impact on the reformist currents in Islam. These are: his profound aversion

---

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Sillam Madkūr, Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī, bā'ith al nahdat' al fikriyah fi'sh sharg, Cairo, 1937, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> sharh i hāl, p. 55 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Kohn, A History of Nationalism in the East, London, 1929, p. 38 et seq.

to the British, his seemingly contradictory defence of racial and religious tolerance, and his plea for strengthening religious faith with the aid of reason.

Reference has already been made to the personal and emotional side of Afghānī's opposition to the British. It must be noted here that this opposition was also invoked, and justified, by some concrete facts of political life. The height of Afghānī's career as a political and religious leader coincided with one of the darkest periods of the history of British colonialism. In every corner of the Muslim world the British were coping with a growingly aggressive nationalist movement. In India the crushing of the 1857 Mutiny and in Afghanistan the installing of Shīr Allī at the expense of Muḥammad 'Azam had left, among the defeated, bitter feelings of frustration and a craving for revenge. In Egypt, nationalist resistance to British pressure led to the 1882 uprising and the subsequent British occupation of the country. In Sudan, the Mahdī revolt had all the manner of a jihād against the British rule, with far-reaching repercussions throughout the Muslim world. Even Persia, which was free from British hegemony, also had her share of anti-British hatred: the Anglo-Persian war of 1856 over Herat, resulting in Persia's defeat, had undermined the relationship between the two countries, making the Persians acutely suspicious of Britain's intention in the East.

It was one of the chief achievements of Afghānī that he translated these feelings of frustration, hatred and revengefulness into a definite and consistent shape, sanctioned by the lofty ideas of Islamic unity and

progress. His prime concern was to fight the popular fear of the British power by demonstrating Britain's eventual helplessness in the face of a united Muslim front. As an allusion to this he once published the following fable in one of the issues of 'urwah:

"Once upon a time there was a huge temple on the outskirts of Istakhr which had struck deep terror in the hearts of its inhabitants, because the tale-tellers had spread the belief that those who tried to enter it had all met a fearful death. Finally a man who had no more hope in life decided to undergo the risk and gain access to the secrets of the temple. Despite the strong dissuasion of his friends, he entered the temple. Horrifying voices welcomed him and a voice said: 'We now come to smash your bones'. 'Come forward,' shouted back the man, 'as I am fed up with life!' Hardly had he said this when a deafening noise shook the temple; at once the walls collapsed, pouring forth their hidden treasure and coins. Those who came on the following morning to take the man's dead body found him very much alive and jubilant, asking them to bring containers for carrying the gold and silver away ... Great Britain is such a huge temple in which some misguided people occasionally take refuge when frightened by political darkness and then meet their death there through hallucinations. Many of those who have died within its walls, have been men of weak character. I fear that one day a strong-willed man might be driven by despair into this temple, and then, by his desperate shouting, cause the collapse of its walls and the break-up of this big talisman."<sup>1</sup>

These words, written in 1834, i.e. two years after the British occupation of Egypt and at the time of the Mahdī uprising, well illustrate the depth of Afghānī's conviction of the rightness of his struggle and the certainty of final victory. In all his articles, lectures and harangues, he vehemently condemned Britain, not only as an imperialist power, but

---

<sup>1</sup> al 'urwā' al wuthqā, op.cit., pp. 223-224.

also as a power determined to destroy Islam. "The British Government", he announced, "is the arch-enemy of the Muslims ... Its utmost pleasure is to see the Muslims prostrate and subdued, wielding no control over their own affairs".<sup>1</sup> His hatred against the British sometimes induced him to call openly upon the French and Russians to stand by their "rights" in the East and take up the British challenge. This was completely in tune with his advocacy of power politics, at which we have already hinted. It is noteworthy that, after the British occupation of Egypt, Afghānī, along with most of the Egyptian nationalists, pinned all his hopes on France to bring about an early evacuation of that country. In expressing these hopes, Afghānī even went to the length of conceding some rights for the French in Egypt and for the Russians in Central Asia - a posture which, if not viewed in conjunction with his belief in Realpolitik, would seem contradictory to his ideal of complete freedom of all Muslim peoples.

"The French Government", he reported sympathetically, "is determined to demand Britain to restore French influence (sic) in Egypt as it existed prior to the (dual) control, and the French Press is unanimous in its exposition of the harm of the British policy and Britain's ill intentions..."<sup>2</sup>

Or:

"France is caught up between the equivocations of Britain and the tricks of Bismark. Her previous rights<sub>2</sub> in Egypt have been jeopardised by British intervention."

---

<sup>1</sup> al 'urwat' al wuthqā, p. 334 et seq., also pp. 355-57.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

His hopes of French vigorous action against the British over Egypt were, however, soon to be frustrated. Although up to twenty years after the British occupation, France adopted a hostile attitude towards Britain's policies in Egypt, this hostility - as far as Egypt was concerned - never went beyond a battle of words. Afghānī of course did not live long enough to see the Anglo-French entente of 1904.<sup>1</sup>

Afghānī expressed deep disappointment at French passivity which, in his view, deprived France of "all her rights in Egypt" and "recognised the British overlordship in that country".<sup>2</sup>

Even this disappointment never conduced Afghānī to change his friendly attitude towards France. Not one word of condemnation can be found in any of the issues of 'urwah about the French colonialist policy in North Africa or South East Asia. He regarded the French encroachments on those areas merely as a direct result of British expansionist policy in the East.<sup>3</sup> It is also interesting to note that when he defines the aims of the Western powers in Asia and Africa, he denounces the British, Austrian and Russian motives as "greed" (sharah) and "avarice" (tama'), whereas the French schemes are referred to merely as "aspirations" (amāl).<sup>4</sup>

A logical result of Afghānī's hatred for the British was a development of a 'militant' conception of the spirit of Islam, and especially of

<sup>1</sup> V. infra, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> al 'urwat' al wuthqā, pp. 326-7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 243.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 365.



the idea of ihād. In the face of a power which was, in his eyes, bent on the extermination of Islam, he saw no other choice for the Muslims but to take up arms. He bitterly attacked all those religious leaders in Muslim countries who were tampering with the Islamic injunctions by their pacifist teachings. His belief in a militant Islam is also apparent from the prominence which he has given to the Mahdī uprising in the pages of 'urwah. In practically every issue of the paper there is either a report on the developments of the Sudanese problem, or laudatory remarks on the bravery of the rebels,<sup>1</sup> or some advice as to the contributions that other Muslims in the world can make towards the total success of the rebellion.

"Even if he (Mahdī)", wrote Afghānī in an article referring to the demonstrations among the Indian Muslims in favour of Mahdī, "be not a mahdī, they should believe that he is so, as this belief might render them unanimous in their demand for liberation from the British dominance".<sup>2</sup>

This brings us to another instance of inconsistency in Afghānī's thoughts. Whereas he supported Mahdī's uprising even to the point of endorsing his "messianic" claims, yet he was exhorting his fellow Muslims untiringly to purify their minds of belief in superstition and "saint cult". He thought this purification to be necessary, especially because the belief

---

<sup>1</sup>See especially pp. 219-20, 225-48, 231 and 243.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

in the Unity of God requires the simplification of thinking and forbids such foolish and extravagant notions as idolatry, or incarnations and suffering of the deity. He has been rightly regarded in the history of modern Islamic thought as the champion in reconciling "the historic theological and philosophical positions of Islam with the attainments of modern scientific thought".<sup>1</sup> It was his abounding interest in the study of philosophy as a means of encouraging independent judgment that brought upon him, on more than one occasion, the anathema of the orthodoxy.

One of Aghānī's few articles which throws a vivid light on his love of philosophy and his persistent fight against the bigoted is his reply to Ernest Renan in the French Journal des Débats. In a lecture entitled "Islam and Science", delivered at the Sorbonne, Renan had announced that Islam, in essence, is opposed to the development of science and that the Arabs, by nature, hate both metaphysical sciences and philosophy.<sup>2</sup> While refuting the first part of Renan's argument and bringing to mind the Arabs' contribution to the sciences throughout the Islamic period, Aghānī went out of his way to admit that "the Islamic religion, wherever it has been established, has sought to stifle the sciences" and that "so long as humanity exists, the fight between dogma and free thinking, between religion and philosophy, will not cease".<sup>3</sup> These remarks explain why Aghānī's

---

<sup>1</sup> Adams, op.cit., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> A.M. Golchon's Introduction to Réfutation des matérialistes, Librairie Orientaliste, Paris, 1942, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Journal des Débats, May 18, 1883.

biographers have seldom discussed, or even made mention of, the above article.

His Radd bar nahcherivsh also contains passages in praise of the Protestant movement in the history of Christianity, with especial emphasis on the Protestants' rational attitude as well as their denunciation of any ecclesiastical intermediary between Man and God.

"They (the Protestants)", he says, "called their doctrine Iqsh, Reform, and expanded it in many countries. Their followers, having released their necks from the yoke, soon overcame their ignorance ... They spoke after having been silent, attained knowledge after having been ignorant, judged after having been judged, and became masters after having been dominated".

The appeal for reason found another expression in Afghani's frequent advocacy of religious tolerance and his relentless attack upon all claims to racial superiority. Therefore, while he regarded ta'asub (zeal or enthusiasm) to be of great value to individual and social progress, and thus a cause of progress and improvement, he decried its excess as a vice conducive to injustice and transgression (and in this sense ta'asub might be translated into prejudice):

"The excessively prejudiced", he said, "holds only his group to be worthy of honour, and looks down upon the foreigner, recognizing no right for him, nor any responsibility (shimma) towards him. He thus defects from the path of justice. It is then that the blessing of ta'asub turns into a vice, depriving the nation of its splendour and dignity ... This degree of excess in ta'asub has been deprecated by the Lawgiver (the Prophet) in his saying:

'He who calls for prejudice is not from us'.<sup>1</sup>

But whereas religious prejudice is to a certain extent permissible as a motive for defending the dignity of Islam (especially in the face of people like Gladstone who breathed the spirit of religious prejudice<sup>2</sup>), racial prejudice is condemnable from every standpoint.

"Every rational principle", he said, "which is invoked in ascribing glory and pride exclusively to racial prejudice, and in maintaining this prejudice as one of the highest virtues ... is faulty and should therefore be dismissed."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, a few words must be said on Afghānī's attitude towards Western culture and the Muslims' adoption of Western educational methods. Afghānī never concealed his appreciation of Western culture. His book radd bar naichirīyih abounds in references indicating his unflinching contact with the currents of Western thought, irrespective of their vices and virtues, in the past as well as in his time. These references range from the criticism of materialistic thought in ancient Greece<sup>4</sup> to that of the Mormons in the United States.<sup>5</sup> A number of mistaken statements in the book, however, especially those on the history of Greek thought, show that Afghānī did not always use first-hand sources in his studies of Western culture.

<sup>1</sup> al 'urwat 'al wuthqā, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> Goichen, op. cit., p. 63 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

he takes, for instance, Epicurus (born 341) to have been the disciple of Diogenes the Cynic (born 413) instead of Diogenes the Laërtius.<sup>1</sup> His far-fetched comments on Lucretius' conception of the evolution of Man<sup>2</sup> and some of his inaccurate or untraceable quotations from Darwin,<sup>3</sup> are further instances.

As regards the Muslims' adoption of Western culture, as was stated at the beginning of this chapter, the experiments of Egyptians and Turks in imitating Western methods of education ended in the third quarter of the nineteenth century - in a complete fiasco. This prompted the Muslim reformists to look elsewhere for the causes of umma's spiritual plight. This search led to the belief that it is the general decline and stagnation of Islam as a religion that is the principal cause.<sup>4</sup> Hence the efforts, such as those of Afghānī, to reform Islam so as to adapt it to the conditions of the modern world.

While Afghānī admits the wisdom of benefitting from the Western advances in the modern sciences, he is against transplanting Western edu-

<sup>1</sup> Geichon, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>4</sup> H. A. R. Gibb, for reasons which he does not sufficiently adumbrate to us, believes that the failure of the reformists came chronologically before their recourse to Western educational methods in the nineteenth century (Whither Islam? Victor Gollancz, London, 1932, p. 40ff.). But so far as the nineteenth century is concerned, the chronological order of the above trends seems to be the reverse of this. We need not mention any reasons for this, other than the fact that the efforts of such rulers as Muhammad 'Alī in westernizing Egypt preceded those of Afghānī and 'Abduh in modernising Islam.

national institutions in Muslim countries.

"The Ottomans and Egyptians", he says, "founded a number of schools, modelled on the modern pattern, and sent groups of their students to the European countries to bring back what was required of the sciences, education, industries and belles-lettres ... But have the Egyptians and Ottomans reaped any advantage from their efforts? Have their conditions become better than what they were before resorting to this new device?"<sup>1</sup>

He thinks not. What is then to be done? Just as the early Muslims, he replies, began to learn the medicine of Hippocrates and Galen, the geometry of Euclid, the astronomy of Ptolemy and the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle only after they had consolidated the bases of Islam, so must the present-day Muslims start to imbibe European teachings only after putting their own house in order.<sup>2</sup> This, in fact, is the essence of Afghānī's view on the Muslims' relation to modernism.

---

Afghānī was a man of striking contradictions, both in his ordinary, daily demeanour<sup>3</sup> and in his sublime abstract ideals. It is therefore futile, as has been noted by W. C. Smith, to search in him for the systematizing thinker which some of Afghānī's biographers<sup>4</sup> hold him to

---

<sup>1</sup>al 'urwat'al wuthqa, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Muḥammad Makhzūmī, khāṭirāt, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Murtaḍā Muddarasī Chāḥārdahī, and Makhzūmī, op.cit.

be. The significance of his achievements lay in his practical efforts towards the Muslim awakening.

"With his ebullient rhetoric and tireless repetition", continues Smith, "Afghani fired audiences in one Muslim country after another to a reawakened consciousness of how they had once been mighty, but now were weak .... His vivid evocations<sup>1</sup> elicited a spirited response that has since ramified".

We can afford to be briefer on Afghani's most outstanding disciple, Ash Shaikh Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), whose biography and doctrines have been surveyed in great detail by C. C. Adams. 'Abduh's significance lay in his efforts to turn Afghani's obstructive criticisms of Muslim life, at least within the framework of Egyptian social fabric, into a positive, revitalizing force. Thanks to his prolific literary output, we are well equipped with illuminating evidence to study his thoughts. From our viewpoint, one of the most important features of 'Abduh's doctrines seems to be a certain obsession with the necessity of keeping abreast of the modern sciences. This obsession was undoubtedly due to his frequent visits to Europe, which enabled him to acquire a grasp of Western culture.

"So stimulating", says Adams, "and valuable did he himself find his travels in Europe which circumstances not of his own planning had made possible the first time [i.e. his expulsion from Egypt in 1882] that in later years he re-

---

<sup>1</sup>W. E. Smith, Islam in Modern History, p.50.

turned to Europe again and again, whenever he felt the need, as he said, 'of renewing his soul'.<sup>1</sup>

Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā, 'Abduh's greatest disciple and biographer, has discerned three stages in his master's educational career. During the first stage 'Abduh was occupied in the Azhar with barren controversies over the phrases of past authors and in the perusal of textbooks with comments, annotations and explanations. During the second period he was released from the bond of blind imitation (taqlīd) of the past thinkers by Afghānī and elevated to the heights of true mysticism and rationalism.<sup>2</sup> The third, and the most significant, stage started with 'Abduh's acquaintance with European sciences, especially social studies, history and philosophy. He managed, during his visits to Europe, to learn some French and thereby read a number of French books on the above subjects.

"In this age", he is reported by Rashīd Riḍā to have said, "he who does not know one of the European languages is not regarded among the learned" .... What increased my interest in learning French was my realization that nobody can lay claim to any degree of knowledge with which he could serve his nation and defend its interests unless he knows a European language somehow or other. The interests of Muslims have become entwined (mushtabak) with those of Europeans in all parts of the world. Is it, therefore, possible for anybody who does not know any of the European languages to benefit from their (Europeans') good and protect himself against their evils?<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Adams, op.cit., p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Al Manār, July, 1950 (Vol. VIII), p. 333.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 394.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 395-60.



Amongst Western philosophers, Herbert Spencer and Tolstoi particularly invoked his admiration. He visited Spencer in Brighton on August 10, 1903 and in this conversation, as related by Rashīd Riḍā, Spencer deprecated the growth of materialism in the West and the Europeans' admiration of power as the basis of power.<sup>1</sup> The evolutionist character of Spencerian philosophy, especially in its social aspect, must have proved highly attractive to 'Abduh. 'Abduh translated Spencer's book entitled Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical (1861) from a French version into Arabic only as an exercise in the art of translation<sup>2</sup> but still he is said to have based his proposed system for the state schools on many of Spencer's views.<sup>3</sup> As regards Tolstoi, it was his 'puritanist' approach to religion and his 'pacifist' preachings on the means and ways of effecting social reforms that fired 'Abduh's imagination. He wrote a laudatory letter to Tolstoi on the occasion of the latter's excommunication from the Russian Church.

"You have enlightened", he wrote to him, "our horizons with your opinions and have forged a unity between your soul and the souls of wise men.... You have blown away the veil of blind imitation (taqlīd) and thereby gained access to the truth of the Unity of God."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>tārīkh, I, pp. 868-69.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., I, p; 1034.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted from al munāẓir (published in San Paulo) in tārīkh, III, p. 138.

<sup>4</sup>tārīkh, II, pp. 623-24.

But a European thinker who had, by all accounts, made a deep impression on his mind was François Pierre Guillaume Guizot (1787-1879) whose l'Histoire de la Civilization en Europe (1828) was translated by Humain Ni'mat Allāh in Alexandria in 1877.<sup>1</sup> The book had also attracted Afghānī's attention, as can be gathered from a paragraph of his radd bar naichəriyāh.<sup>2</sup> A summary of the main ideas of this book seems, therefore, to be in place here. In order to be better able to assess the impact of Guizot's book on 'Abduh and his fellow thinkers, we choose its Arabic translation for the sake of our reference.

Although in his political career, especially towards the end of his life, Guizot was a diehard conservative, his book should be regarded rather as an apologia of liberalism. Being a staunch Protestant, Guizot devotes a substantial part of his book to the conflicts between the Catholic Church and forces of reform in the Middle Ages as one of the determining factors of European history. He extols the endeavours of people like Johannes Scotus Erigena (830-880), Roscellinius (c. 1050-c. 1122) and Peter Abelard (1079-1142) who, by giving the pride of place in their theological systems to reason and by affording a rational expression to the accepted ecclesiastical doctrine, initiated the movement of reformation in Europe.

"If we probe", says the writer, "into the causes of that movement, we clearly see that it did not bring about any

---

<sup>1</sup> Adams, op.cit., pp. 39-44. al manār, August 1905, (Vol. VIII), p. 404.

<sup>2</sup> Goichon, op.cit., p. 165.

change in the ideas and principles of the public religion, nor did it negate that religion. They (the rationalist thinkers) merely appealed on behalf of reason for restoring its right of say."<sup>1</sup>

In another chapter the writer gives a detailed account of the causes, nature and results of the European Reformation in the sixteenth century. After denouncing the suppressive measure adopted by the medieval Church towards its critics and describing the abuses and disadvantages resulting from the headship of the Bishop of Rome,<sup>2</sup> he regards the causes of Reformation to be: (a) the general awakening of human conscience which gave an impetus to the demand for progress and emancipation; (b) the stagnancy and decline of the spiritual authorities which exercised power over the minds of their followers. But he emphasises that the main force behind the Reformation was an intense craving for freedom and that the principal outcome of the Reformation was the emancipation of the human mind from the bondage of absolutism in all its forms.<sup>3</sup> In other words, his view seems to be in accord with the assertion of the modern students of Church history who "dismiss the religious changes incident to the Reformation with the remark that they were not the object sought, but the means for attaining the object".

---

<sup>1</sup> at tuhfat al adabiyah fi tarikh tamaddun al mamalik al urubawiyah,  
translated by Al Khwaja Hunain Ni'mat Allah Khuri, Matba'at 'l Ahram,  
Alexandria, 1877, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 356-68.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 381-90.

Finally, Guizot tries to make a general appraisal of the Reformation and finds its weak point in the mental confusion and rudderlessness of the Reformist leaders and their excessive use of freedom.<sup>1</sup>

The spirit of 'Abduh's achievement with regard to Islamic revivalism appears to be singularly dominated by the two main conclusions of Guizot's assessment of the Reformation: the urgent necessity of freedom of individual thought, and the desirability of temperance in exercising that freedom. Thus, while "he defined the purpose of his life as having been to free the Muslim mind from the shackles of indiscriminate obedience to tradition",<sup>2</sup> he did not adopt "as did the Mutazulites, a wholly rationalist and naturalistic view of religion".<sup>3</sup> But all this is not to suggest that he was wholly at the mercy of European spiritual influence. As has been shown by Adams and Mohammad Ahmad, in forming his doctrinal system, 'Abduh successfully reconciled the teachings of the early Muslim thinkers like al Ghazzālī (1059-1111) and Ibn Taimiyah (d. 1328) with the 'demands of modern progress'.<sup>4</sup>

In response to these "demands of progress" 'Abduh devoted his life, especially after the shattering effect of 'Arābi's failure (1882) to his

<sup>1</sup>at tuhfat 'al adabiyah, pp. 390-93.

<sup>2</sup>Jamal Mohammad Ahmed, The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>G.C. Adams, op.cit., pp. 202-204 and Ahmed's The Intellectual Origins, pp. 42-43.

semi-revolutionary political ideas and his final remprochement with the Khedive-Abbas II (1892-1914), to inculcating the spirit of modernism into the educational and social institution of Egypt. How far he was able to achieve this in the educational field after his appointment to its Administrative Council (1895) is not known. Both Rashīd Riḍā and Adams give us detailed accounts of the administrative improvements effected in the Azhar under 'Abduh,<sup>1</sup> but neither of them is precise on his reform of the Azhar's curriculum. Rashīd Riḍā makes some vague reference to 'Abduh's pressure behind the introduction into the Azhar's curriculum of elements of arithmetic and algebra as compulsory, and the history of Islam, elements of geography and composition as optional 'modern' subjects.<sup>2</sup> Equally vague is J. Jomier in his article on Al Azhar in the new edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam.<sup>3</sup> But it is not clear whether these subjects were considered 'modern' because of their first appearance in the curriculum of the Azhar, or because of the modernist outlook underlying the textbook concerned. Only at one point does Rashīd Riḍā refer to 'Abduh's adoption of Guizot's above-mentioned book as the basis of his lectures on political science, which must have been a definitely modernistic improvement; but Riḍā adds immediately that "I do not know whether

---

<sup>1</sup>Riḍā, tārīkh, pp. 425-428. Adams, Islam and Modernism, pp. 70-78.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 449-451.

<sup>3</sup>Article entitled "al azhar" in The Encyclopaedia of Islam (New edition), London, 1958, 13, p. 818.

he completed [his lecture] or not".<sup>1</sup> In view of all this, and especially considering K. Vollers' rather gloomy picture of the attempted reforms of the Azhar in the nineteenth century and his reference to "the obsolete and insufficient textbooks" used for the "rational sciences" in the Azhar,<sup>2</sup> it would be fair to assume that 'Abduh's attempts did not much affect the content of the Azharite education. Far more successful were 'Abduh's efforts in the social field. It was in his position as the Mufti of Egypt (1889-1905) that he gave the strongest impetus to modernistic tendencies among Egyptian Muslims. While "most of his predecessors in this office had considered themselves to be jurisconsults to the departments of the Government only, and gave no decisions except on matters referred to them by these departments,"<sup>3</sup> his fatwas, or legal opinions, were final and authoritative, all being characterized by a spirit of liberality and "a desire to render the religion of Islam entirely adaptable to the requirements of modern civilization".<sup>4</sup>

'Abduh's feelings towards Britain and France as two political powers might be said to be quite the reverse of Afghānī's. Politically he was pro-British and anti-French. True, before his expulsion from Egypt in

---

<sup>1</sup> al manār, August 1905, (Vol. VIII), p. 404. In Adams' Islam and Modernism, (p. 44) this sentence has been omitted.

<sup>2</sup> Article entitled "al azhar" in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, London, 1911, IX, pp. 532-39.

<sup>3</sup> Adams, Islam, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

1883, and even for some time after that, he shared Afghānī's anti-British stand and took an active part in all kinds of agitations, open or secret, against the British; but after his return to Egypt (1888) he developed a more and more friendly attitude towards Britain and forged an implicit alliance with the Occupation. It is thus not surprising that Lord Cromer should have spoken of him as a man of "bread and enlightened views ... who recognised the necessity of European assistance in reform".<sup>1</sup> 'Abduh's biographers, past and present, have been at some pains to justify this association between a foreign occupying power and a leading Egyptian patriot. Dr. Muḥammad Al Bahay, Professor of Islamic philosophy at the University of al Azhar, for instance, is of the opinion that 'Abduh entered into friendly relations with the British mainly to protect himself against the Khedive.<sup>2</sup> To counteract the then growing accusation of 'Abduh's "complicity" with the British Rashīd Riḍā also made numerous quotations from him in denunciation of the British occupation.<sup>3</sup> It was, however, a sign of 'Abduh's gradual withdrawal from the general anti-British campaign that his political association with Afghānī is said to have grown increasingly cool towards the end of the latter's life.<sup>4</sup> This

---

<sup>1</sup> Lord Cromer, op.cit., pp. 179-81.

<sup>2</sup> al fikr al islāmī al haḍīth wa silatuhū bi'l isti'mār al gharbī, Maḥba'ah Mukhamir, Cairo, 1957, pp. 146-150.

<sup>3</sup> tārīkh, I, pp. 921-24.

<sup>4</sup> Muḥammad Ahmed, op.cit., p. 36.

seems to be in keeping with his penchant for the evolutionism of Spencer and the pacifism of Tolstoi.

By contrast, as can be gathered from Rashid Riḍā's accounts, 'Abduh adopted a definitely hostile attitude towards France. "No nation", he is reported to have said, "hates the Muslim because of his being a Muslim - except the French". "Whenever", he said on another occasion, "I have a conversation with a Frenchman on the conditions of the Eastern peoples, I feel disgusted, and the whole of my body begins to tremble".<sup>1</sup> Rashid Riḍā regards this hostility as a reaction, on the one hand, against the "raging hatred" evinced by French Catholics towards Islam and, on the other, against the general policy of the French, as opposed to the British, in disregarding "the opinions, and the social and scientific capabilities of those over whom they rule".<sup>2</sup> These considerations apparently did not undermine 'Abduh's admiration and appreciation of French Culture, as can be inferred from his zealous efforts in learning the French language and imbibing the thoughts of some of the French writers of his time.

---

<sup>1</sup> tārīkh, I, p. 925. Riḍā quotes a letter addressed by Gustave Le Bon to 'Abd al Ghānī Efendi, dated April 3, 1921, in which he writes: "Our inherited Catholic principles make us one of the most mortal enemies of Muslims."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



The teachings of Afghānī and 'Abduh combined to produce in Egypt and other Muslim countries a succession of Muslim writers and thinkers with an entirely new approach to the problems facing Islam in the modern world. Prominent among these writers and thinkers were those usually now referred to as the manār group headed by 'Abduh's disciple and biographer, Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, to whom reference has already been made. His monthly periodical al manār, which appeared for the first time on March 17, 1898, tried to carry the doctrines of Afghānī to their logical conclusions by fighting the bigotry of the different schools of sharī'ah (Canon Law), promoting general education, encouraging progress in the sciences and arts and arousing the Muslim nations to compete with other nations in all matters which are essential to national progress.<sup>1</sup> Of notable importance was his formation of the Society of Propaganda and Guidance (jam 'Iyāt 'ad da'wah wa'l irshād) in 1909, the idea of which first suggested itself to his mind when he frequented the bookshop of the American missionaries in Tripoli. The main aim of the Society was to counteract the activities of Christian missions in Muslim lands through giving religious training to youth and educating the future preachers and teachers of Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Apart from this effort, which was discontinued on

---

<sup>1</sup> Adams, op.cit., pp. 180-181.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 196-97.

the outbreak of the first World War, Riḍā's other schemes do not seem to have been particularly successful, either because of their impracticability<sup>1</sup> or because of the opposition of the Nationalist Party of Egypt (al hizb al waṭani) as led by Muṣṭafā Kāmil. It must be recalled that Riḍā's pursuit, in the footsteps of Afghānī and 'Abduh, of a common Islamic brotherhood transcending all national lines came into a head-on collision with Kāmil's advocacy of a nationalism "in which religion and language were not the determining factors".<sup>2</sup>

Riḍā definitely represented the last of a generation of Muslim thinkers who without yielding too much in their systems of thought to European influences and without touching upon the basic principles of Islam tried to adapt their religion to the exigencies of modernism.

Riḍā was a Syrian by nationality; but in view of his close association with 'Abduh as well as his involvement with Egyptian affairs he has been ranked among the Egyptian protagonists of Islamic revivalism. Another Syrian living during 'Abduh's lifetime, who made no less a weighty contribution to that revivalism in his own right, was 'Abd ar Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad al Kawākibī. A cursory review of the Westernization of Syria is

<sup>1</sup>E.g. his proposal to the Cairo Congress on the Caliphate in May 1926, for the founding of a school for the training of candidates for the Caliphate. (Adams, op.cit., p. 266.)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

necessary before discussing Kawākibī's contribution to Islamic revivalism. Roughly from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, Syria started to liberate herself from the crippling and obscurantist isolation imposed on her by the Ottoman Empire. The occupation of Syria by Ibrāhīm Fāshā (1831-1840), whose father Muḥammad 'Alī was the first to establish contacts with the West, followed by the establishment of the American Press in Beirut in 1834, of the Protestant Church in 1848, of the Imprimerie Catholique of the Jesuits in 1853 and of the Syrian Protestant College (now American University of Beirut) in 1866, were the main events which opened wide the Syrian door for Western cultural influence.<sup>1</sup> Most of the Syrian intellectuals thrown up by this wave of enlightenment, such as Jurjī Zaidān (founder of al hilāl) and the Taqlā brothers (founders of al ahrām), sooner or later found in Egypt a more congenial atmosphere for their activities since, compared with the rigorous censorship maintained by 'Abdul Ḥamīd's agents in Syria, they could enjoy ample freedom in the British Occupied Egypt.

In Syria, as in Egypt, French cultural influence was seen to dominate the spiritual life, but mainly for historical reasons. The French connection with Syria and Lebanon dates back to the Crusades - not to speak of the earlier days of Charlemagne's dispatch of letters and presents to the Abbasid Caliph Harūn al Rashīd to obtain the custody of the Christian Holy places. Crusaders, who were mainly organized by the French kings, priest,

---

<sup>1</sup> Phillip K. Hitti, History of Syria, Macmillan, London, 1957, p. 701.

nobles and knights, left their mark upon Syria in the castles and churches which they built and of which the ruins still exist. The modern French connection with Syria started with the France-Ottoman agreement of 1535, serving as the basis for the first 'capitulation' as well as for the French protection of Catholic interests in the Levant. From that year onwards we see a succession of French attempts at consolidating their interests in Syria and Lebanon, marked by the renewal of the capitulations in 1673, Napoleon's invasion of Syria (1799), military intervention in the Lebanon following the disturbances of 1860 and the Treaty of Berlin (1878) giving formal international recognition to the French Protectorate over the Catholics in the Holy Place.<sup>1</sup>

---

Kawākibī was a dominant figure of the Syria of the late nineteenth century. He was born in Aleppo on July 9, 1854. His father was Ash Shaikh Aḥmad Bahā'ī ibn Muḥammad ibn Mas'ūd, a man of wide knowledge and affable character. His mother, As Sayidah 'Afifah, was the daughter of the Muftī of Antioch, of a well-to-do family. Because of the death of his mother only five years later, his early life was accompanied by much suffering and deprivation. Bereft of maternal care, 'Abd ar Raḥmān was sent by his father to Antioch to be placed in the care of his aunt, As Sayidah Ṣafīyah. He showed a keen

---

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, R.I.I.A., Oxford University Press, 1954, third impression, pp. 146-150.

eagerness for learning. During his three years in Antioch he picked up some Turkish and then returned to Aleppo to resume his studies at the Madrasat' ash Shaykh Fāhīr al Kīzī; then, in addition to Arabic and Turkish, he started to learn Persian. In 1864, at the age of eleven, he was sent back to Antioch. Inspired at this impressionable age by the expansive gardens and grounds in and around that town, which lent themselves to the wanderings of both the eye and the soul, he developed a breadth of mind and insight which remained one of his characteristics up to his death. A year later he went to Aleppo to take up his studies at the Madrasat' al Kawākibiyah, of which his father was the director and a teacher. There he studied the fundamentals of the Islamic religion and Arabic under such prominent men as Shalīh 'Abd al Qādir al Hibāl and Shalīh Moḥammad 'Alī Kahīl. He learned the modern sciences from Ustaḍh Khurshīd, an outstanding Turkish man of letters; he also achieved mastery of Turkish and Persian. His knowledge of Turkish enabled him to read some of the Turkish newspapers published in Constantinople, which carried extensive translation from Western sources. At the age of twenty two he became first an outside contributor to and then a member of the editorial board of furūḡ, an official newspaper appearing in Arabic and Turkish. In 1873, he founded the first Arabic newspaper of Aleppo, ash shahbā', in co-operation with Ḥashīm 'Ayyār. The highly critical tone of this paper in regard to the despotism of the

---

1Dr. Sāmī ad Dahhān, 'Abd ar Raḥmān al Kawākibī, dar al ma'ārif bi miḡr, 1955, p. 17.

Sultan and its advocacy of the political rights of the Syrians alarmed the Turkish Governor of Aleppo, Kāmil Pāshā Qubrusī, who hastened to close down the paper after it had appeared for only fifteen issues. Another newspaper initiated by Kawākibī in 1879 called i'tidāl, in Arabic and Turkish, was also closed down by the Turkish authorities in view of its nationalist clamourings. This ended the first phase of Kawākibī's experience in journalism - a phase during which he established his fame as the founder of the Arabic Press of Syria.<sup>1</sup> Then started a period of an intense and, at times, brilliant administrative career in Kawākibī's life. After serving as the sinecure member of the Education and Finance Committees, he was made Director of the official printing house and member of the Commercial Court. In all these offices he did his utmost in serving the people as well as in reforming the organisations under his charge. His outspoken manner and revolutionary methods further frightened the governing authorities who already knew that all the inflammatory articles in the newspapers of Constantinople and Beirut, condemning the Ottoman despotism, were flowing from the pen of Kawākibī. Numerous detectives were thereupon charged with keeping constant watch on his movements. Exasperated by this, Kawākibī resigned all his positions at the end of 1886, and established a barrister's office in which he gave legal advice to all those who fell victim to the rulers' tyranny, helping in the preparation of petitions

---

<sup>1</sup> Abd ar Rahman al Kawākibī, p. 20.

against the oppressors. An attempt on the life of the Turkish Governor of Aleppo in 1886 by an Armenian lawyer gave the authorities a long-awaited excuse to arrest Kawākibī, with a number of Syrian dignitaries. But after a series of legal tussles<sup>1</sup> he was released from prison, his prestige enhanced both with the populace and the rulers. He had now achieved such fame that he was appointed the Mayor of Aleppo in 1892. It was in this post that he demonstrated his reformist zeal by bringing about far-reaching changes in the municipal system of Aleppo. His successive positions were the Head of the Chamber of Commerce (1892), the Chief Secretary to the Religious Court of Aleppo (1894) and Chairman of the Committee for the Sale of State Lands. In all these positions he had to stand up against the growing opposition of the Ottoman oppressors and Syrian exploiters. It may be because he despaired of overcoming this opposition to his reformistic schemes that he left Syria for Egypt on December 6, 1899, at the age of forty-seven. It was only natural that his choice should fall on Egypt. As mentioned before,<sup>2</sup> the intense political and religious agitations rampant in that country, under the leadership of Afghānī and 'Abduh, offered a most congenial atmosphere for the dynamic character of Kawākibī.

In Cairo, Kawākibī soon established contact with influential intel-

---

<sup>1</sup>Muḥammad Khalaf Allāh, al Kawākibī, bayātuhū wa ārauhū, Maktabat 'al 'Arab, Cairo, 1956, pp. 15-16.

<sup>2</sup>supra, p. 99.

lectual circles. He contributed articles to al muayyad, and completed his two major works, tabā'i' al istibdād and umm al qurā.<sup>1</sup> He was in close touch with his compatriots, who had escaped Ottoman tyranny earlier. Every evening he met such outstanding champions of Arab freedom as Rashīd Riḡā, Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, Ṭāhīr az Zahrāwī in the Splendide Bar. In 1901, while on a mission from the Khedive, 'Abbās II, to collect the signatures of Arab shaikhs and Amīrs to a petition appealing for the Khedive to be proclaimed the Caliph,<sup>1</sup> he made journeys to the heart of the Arabian peninsula, the Yemen, the Sudan and Zanzibar, and afterwards visited Abyssinia, Karachi and Bombay. As a result of these tours, he obtained first-hand knowledge of the social, political and economic conditions of Muslims. After his return to Egypt, he adhered closely to the Manār school.<sup>2</sup> The publication of tabā'i' al istibdād and umm al qurā had now established his fame in Egypt as an eminent revivalist. But death suddenly overtook him in a Cairo cafe on June 14, 1902.

Thanks to his two major books we have a clear picture of Kawākibī's ideas on a wide range of subjects affecting the Muslim way of life. Tabā'i' al istibdād wa masāri' al isti'bād was originally a series of articles appearing in al muayyad dealing with the nature of despotism, which were collected and published in book form in 1900. The book has been lauded by

---

<sup>1</sup> Dahhān, op.cit., p. 30. See also umm al qurā, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Norbert Tapiero, Les Idées Reformistes d'Al Kawākibī, Les Éditions Arabes, 1956, p. 4.



some Arab critics as "unique in its kind".<sup>1</sup> The uniqueness seems to lie in the content rather than in the style. It is the first Arabic book which is entirely and consistently devoted to a purely political subject. Arab authors, up to the time of Kawākibī, treated politics not as an independent subject but as a subsidiary discipline in their treatises on morals, literature and history. Tabā'ī<sup>2</sup> is a bold and exhaustive approach to one of the major political issues of the Arab world at the end of the nineteenth century, i.e. Ottoman despotism. Kawākibī's long career of public service had familiarized him with the nature and mechanism of a despotic regime - a fact which lends such an engaging vigour and topicality to the book. Kawākibī analyses in detail the harmful effects of despotism on the religion,<sup>3</sup> prosperity,<sup>4</sup> morals,<sup>5</sup> education,<sup>5</sup> and social progress<sup>6</sup> of the nation. But, as Tapiere points out, it is erroneous to consider tabā'ī<sup>2</sup> merely as a negative effort towards the elimination of a social plight. Kawākibī leaves no doubt in this book as to his ideal alternative to despotism: - constitutional democracy. He tries to establish democracy

---

<sup>1</sup> Zaidān, bunāt an nahḍat 'al 'arabiyyah, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> tabā'ī al istibdād waṣ maḡarī' al istibdād, maḡba'at'l ma'ārif, Cairo, 1904, p. 17 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 68 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 87 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 110 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 128 et seq.

as the best possible form of government<sup>1</sup> compatible with the teachings of Islam.<sup>2</sup> He not only condemns despotism, but propounds the ways and means of uprooting it.<sup>3</sup>

To what extent was Kawākibī influenced in his treatment of despotism by Western notions of state and democracy? This is somewhat difficult to assess. Tapiero writes that Kawākibī probably knew French,<sup>4</sup> while Dahnān<sup>5</sup> and Ahmad Amīn<sup>6</sup> believe that he knew no European languages, yet we find numerous references in tabā'ī' to European events, institutions and developments such as the Dreyfus and Panama affairs,<sup>7</sup> French and Russian despotism,<sup>8</sup> housing in England,<sup>9</sup> Gladstone's character<sup>10</sup> and Austrian and American experiments in political unity.<sup>11</sup> Dahnān provides an explanation for this by reminding us that Kawākibī's knowledge of Turkish enabled him to study European thought and history through the Turkish translations of

<sup>1</sup>tabā'ī', p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 161 et seq.

<sup>4</sup>Les Idées, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>Abd ar Rahmān, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup>Ahmad Amīn, zu'ama' al islāh fi'l 'agr al hadīth, maktabat' an nahdat' al 'arabiyah, Cairo, 1948, pp. 254-284.

<sup>7</sup>tabā'ī', p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

European sources.<sup>1</sup> A reference in jabā'ī' to Victor Alfieri, the Italian poet (1743-1803), has led Amin to believe that the book is an adaptation of an essay by Alfieri on despotism.<sup>2</sup> Tapiere, on the other hand, discerns a close similarity between jabā'ī' and Montesquieu's l'Esprit des Lois in so far as the subjects of despotism and constitutional government are concerned.<sup>3</sup> The two views are not contradictory since Alfieri, despite his hatred of the French, drank deeply from the springs of French thought.

Kawākibī's other book, umm al qurā, is a much more serious work and contains his principal views on such pertinent issues as the causes of Islam's decline, its position in the modern world and the methods of ameliorating the lot of Muslims and achieving unity. The book is apparently the account of the proceedings of an imaginary conference supposedly held by an Islamic Reform Party in Mecca in 1898. On reading the book one first gets the impression that such a congress has, in fact, taken place and that it must have been an unmitigated success for its chief organiser, As Sayid al Furātī (Kawākibī's pen-name). Some outstanding scholars such as Lothrop de Stoddart and Carra de Vaux have thus expressed conviction in the reality of this conference, which according to de Vaux is called "The

---

<sup>1</sup> Abd ar Rahman, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> zu'ama', p. 254. The essay in question is probably Alfieri's De la Tyrannie which was published in French in 1802 and, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica (eleventh edition, Vol. I, p. 581), is an imitation of the works of Machiavelli.

<sup>3</sup> Les Idées, p. 13.

Congress of the Awakening of Islam".<sup>1</sup> Tapiere gives four reasons in refutation of this belief; they can be summarised as follows:

- a) The unanimity observed in the deliberations of the Congress, with its twenty-three delegates, was not possible in the conditions of the Muslim world at the end of the nineteenth century.
- b) Such a unanimity on the part of a number of eminent Muslim thinkers and intellectuals must have had wide-spread repercussions at the time in the Muslim world. No evidence of such repercussions is, however, available.
- c) Owing to the powerful machinery of Ottoman repression, such a congress would not have been allowed to take place in the year 1898.
- d) Finally, a contemporary of Kawākibī, Ash Shaikh Sayid al Bakrī, an Egyptian writer of standing, has attested to the imaginary nature of the Congress.<sup>2</sup>

We might add a fifth reason to the above list: there are many sentences and passages in umm al ourā which have been taken almost verbatim from tabā'ī. Thus, pp. 30, 31, 34, 35, 36 and 149 of tabā'ī correspond exactly with pp. 28, 29, 38 and 129 of umm al ourā.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Les Idées, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 8, 9 and 10.

<sup>3</sup> These are passages discussing such topics as the 'saint-cult', scientific anticipation in the Koran, etc.

But this very fictitiousness of umm al qurā is a credit to Kawākibī's genius. It establishes his fame as one of the first Arab thinkers who introduced the conception of mu'tamar (congress) as a collective deliberative institution into the Arab world - an institution which was, as will be presently seen, seen to enjoy great vogue among the Muslims in general.

Umm al qurā should be regarded as the most concrete and imaginative scheme put forward by any Muslim thinker in the second half of the nineteenth century for laying the basis of Muslim unity. Through the views expressed by various delegates the author tries to approach the problem of the Muslim world from all possible angles. Thus, for instance, while one delegate holds internal conflicts to be the cause of Islamic decline,<sup>1</sup> a second deprecates the obscurantism of the rulers as another cause,<sup>2</sup> while a third refers to the lack of freedom among Muslims,<sup>3</sup> and the fourth laments the absence of any leadership,<sup>4</sup> and so forth.

Like tabā'ī, umm al qurā reveals numerous instances of the influence of Western thought on Kawākibī's outlook. Most important of all is his admiration for Protestantism. Just as Protestantism saved Christ-

---

<sup>1</sup>umm al qurā, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

ianity from the shackles of blind imitation and bigotry by cleansing that religion from harmful accretions, and restoring its original simplicity, so must the modernist Muslims strive for the ascendancy of the pure and untarnished image of Islam by fighting against superstition and innovations.<sup>1</sup> Of special significance are also his eulogical remarks on such prominent European figures as Peter the Great, Bonaparte,<sup>2</sup> Bismarck and Garibaldi<sup>3</sup> in preaching the necessity of the rulers' leniency towards their subjects and the value of leadership in securing national unity.

Umm al curā has lent plausibility to a number of interpretations about Kawākibī's "Pan-Arabist" tendencies. George Antonius,<sup>4</sup> Richard Hartmann,<sup>5</sup> Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh<sup>6</sup> and Zeine<sup>7</sup> have all interpreted in this light Kawākibī's admiration for the Arabs' rule in the history of Islam, as well as his scheme for the abolition of the Sultan's title to the Caliphate and the setting up of a Quraish-born Arab as Caliph in Mecca. Sylvia G. Haim has also seized on a phrase in tabā'i' defining the term umma to demonstrate Kawākibī's "racial theory of nationality".<sup>8</sup> All these interpretations,

---

<sup>1</sup> Umm al curā, p. 99. See also Muhammad Khalaf Allāh, op.cit., p. 19 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Umm al curā, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> The Arab Awakening, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1938, pp. 98-99.

<sup>5</sup> Islam und Nationalismus, Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1948, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Ideas of Arab Nationalism, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> Arab-Turkish Relations, p. 60. Zeine, who generally adopts a critical attitude on most of Antonius' conclusions, has quoted his remarks in this respect without any comment.

<sup>8</sup> "Islam and Arab Nationalism" in Die Welt des Islams, N.S., Vol. IV, Leiden, 1956, p. 139.

however, seem to be exaggerated. True, Kawākibī has repeatedly asserted the Arabs' dominant place in Islam (inna'l 'arab uliyā'al islām)<sup>1</sup> and their innate qualities of solidarity and pride,<sup>2</sup> qualities which, in his opinion, make the Arabs qualified for regaining the position of the Caliphate. But a fact which has often been ignored by Kawākibī's biographers is that he has emphasized his non-political aims in appealing for the transfer of the Caliphate to the Arabs. He wants the Arabs in his Utopian society to preoccupy themselves only with religious affairs.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Haim's haphazard selection of a single phrase in ṭabā'i', in which "community of ancestry" has been mentioned as one of the determinants of nationality,<sup>4</sup> does not at all warrant her assessment that Kawākibī was a proponent of the racial theory of Arab nationalism. Kawākibī has nowhere else raised the problem of nationality in a serious manner, and it does seem unfair to interpret the views of a writer on a given subject on the basis of a passing remark which he has casually made thereon. Moreover, even if we do consider this particular phrase as an indication of Kawākibī's racialist outlook, there are also other phrases in umm al curā which contradict such a view. One might mention, by way of example, the

---

<sup>1</sup> umm al curā, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> ṭabā'i', p. 129.

appeal for refraining from religious and ethnical prejudice (tajannub min at ta'assub ad dīnī wa'l jinsī)<sup>1</sup> and his general plea for equality between races and national solidarity.

However, all this does not invalidate the statement that Kawākibī's Pan-Islamist arguments had a markedly pre-Arab character, and that he advocated Arab unity but mainly as a preliminary step towards Islamic unity. His appreciation of Western institutions is reflected also in his repeated advocacy of parliamentarism, and in his proposal that the Association for Muslim unity should be modelled after the European academias<sup>2</sup> whose enlightened organisations and administrations ensure their survival.

Although Kawākibī has been closely identified by many Arab critics with the Pan-Islamism of Afghānī<sup>3</sup> - his part in that movement being described by Tapiere as merely secondary<sup>4</sup> - one may yet find ample evidence of originality in his system of thought. His partial company with Afghānī on many a point of principle in the drive towards Islamic unity. Firstly, unlike Afghānī, he denounced the adoption of fierce methods in achieving this unity. While Afghānī again and again emphasized the militant aspect of the idea of jihad as a necessary weapon in the fight for unity, Kawākibī was at pains to interpret jihad in pacifist terms.

<sup>1</sup>umm al Qurā, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Jurjī Zaydān, bunāt an nahdat' al arabīyah, p. 99.

<sup>4</sup>Les Idees, p. 2.



"No one", he says, "amongst the 'Ulamā' of Islam has confined the meaning of jihād merely to the fight against non-Muslims. Every arduous effort useful to the religious and temporal life, even practising business for the sake of family (life), is called jihād."<sup>1</sup>

He also cites from the Koran the verses 28/56, 16/126 and 83/122 on the necessity of avoiding violence in furthering the cause of Islam.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, he made a strong case in favour of the separation of state and church, whereas Afghānī either remained silent on the subject or, by defending the caliphate, countenanced the blending of the two powers. This, of course, was in addition to Kawākibī's advocacy of the separation of the judicial, legislative and executive powers of the state, which, as noted by Tapiere, was due to the influence of Montesquieu. In umm al Qurā, after the report of the proceedings of the conference, there is the account of an interview accorded by an Amīr, "a noble man and a politician",<sup>3</sup> to an Indian prince, in which the Amīr sets out in detail the duties, rights and qualities of the ideal Caliph of Muslims.

"The Caliph", he says among other things, "should not interfere with any of the political and administrative affairs."

Apart from these two points, there is much in common between Afghānī and Kawākibī. Like Afghānī, Kawākibī was a stout champion of parliamentary

<sup>1</sup>umm al Qurā, p. 173. Also pp. 19 and 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 71 and 173.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

institutions<sup>1</sup> but his approach to this problem was definitely more elaborate than that of Afghānī, as can be gathered from the detailed scheme for Muslim unity which he proposes in umm al curā. Like Afghānī he was against all manner of blind imitation<sup>2</sup> and 'saint cult' in Islam.<sup>3</sup> Disappointed in the results of transplanting European educational institutions into Muslim countries, he was equally averse to unquestioning imitation of European ways of life and thought.<sup>4</sup> Finally, like Afghānī, he made a scathing attack on Western colonialism, and warned Muslims against its 'numerous tricks and chicaneries' in subduing the Eastern nations.<sup>5</sup>

Although Pan-Islamism, as a political scheme and as one main aspect of the teachings of Afghānī and 'Abduh, became a dead letter with the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the abolition of the Caliphate<sup>6</sup> (March 1924), the other aspect of these teachings, i.e. Islamic revivalism, continued to cause considerable ferment and activity within the Arab-Muslim world. The beginning of the Twentieth Century was marked by a

<sup>1</sup>tabā'ī', p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>umm al curā, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>5</sup>tabā'ī', pp. 144-45.

<sup>6</sup>For a brief exposition of the causes of the failure of Pan-Islamism, see Gibb's Whither Islam?, op.cit., p. 41 et seq.

spectacular growth of Islamic feelings and aspirations in Egypt, Arabia, Iraq, Palestine and Syria. The "vicinity of these countries", "the development of the communication" and "the activity of the Press" have been recognized as the main factors in the spread of these spiritual movements.<sup>1</sup> We must here make special mention of a movement which was originated in Egypt and over a long period constituted the best illustration of the state of mind prevailing, not only in Egypt but in a large part of the Arabic-speaking world as well. This was the jam 'iyat 'ash shubban al muslimin or "The Association of Muslim Youth", established in Cairo in 1927, closely following the precedent of the Young Men's Christian Association founded at Cairo in January 1923. The purpose of this new organization was to spread "Islamic humanization and morals", to work against "dissensions and abuses among the Islamic parties and groups" and (most important of all) to take from the cultures of the East and the West "all that is good, and to reject all that is bad in them".<sup>2</sup> Under the leadership of such eminent personalities as Dr. 'Abdul Hamid Bey Sa'id, an active Egyptian nationalist and a member of the Egyptian Parliament, and Muhibb ad Din al Khatib, an outstanding religious figure later to become the editor-in-chief of majallat 'al Azhar,<sup>3</sup> the Association succeeded in mobilising a sizeable section of the Egyptian youth in the service of Islamic

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Kampffmeyer, "Egypt and Western Asia" in Whither Islam? p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>3</sup>V. infra, p. 302 et seq.

activities. Through holding two inter-Muslim congresses, one at Jaffa in April 1928 and the other at Cairo in 1930, the Association expanded its activities beyond Egypt and created similar associations in Palestine, Iraq and Syria, and played an active part in awakening public opinion in these countries with regard to such important issues of the Islamic world as the Caliphate and missionary activities. It is interesting to note that the Association, in accordance with Article 3 of its Regulations, never relaxed its efforts in familiarizing its membership with the brilliant aspects of Western thought. The Review of the Association contains articles on the lives and activities of men like Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Faraday, Edison, Carnegie and Henry Ford. There is a special essay by Dr. Yahyā ad Dardirī, the editor-in-chief of the Review and a graduate of the Geneva University, in the second issue of the Review, on Robert Owen, in support of the author's appeal for the creation of co-operative societies, especially agricultural, in Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Another illustration of the growing 'Islamic feelings and aspirations' in this period was the holding of three inter-Muslim congresses, one at Cairo in 1926, another at Mecca in the same year and the third at Jerusalem in December 1931. The object of the Cairo Congress of 1926 was to determine the future of the Caliphate, which had become a burning issue in the Islamic world ever since it had been decided at the Turkish

---

<sup>1</sup> Whither Islam? pp. 118-119.

Grand National Assembly, on the 31st March 1924, to abolish it. That decision threw the whole of the Islamic world into a state of profound confusion and depression. Messages of protest were addressed by the 'ulama' of Egypt and the Caliphate Committee of India to Muṣṭafā Kamāl Pashā, and feelings ran high against the Turkish Government in both countries and in favour of the deposed Caliph, 'Abdul Majīd.<sup>1</sup> None of these was of any avail. The Cairo Congress, which marked the culmination of pro-Caliphate agitations in various Muslim countries, in spite of its shortcomings and setbacks, at least gave an impulse to the movement of solidarity between these countries.

The Mecca Congress in the same year embraced a greater number of Muslim countries. Its object was primarily limited and tangible. It was to determine the status of Ḥijāz and its sanctuaries in the face of any anarchy resulting from the struggle between 'Abd al 'Azīz ibn Sa'ūd and King Ḥusain, the Sharīf of Mecca. As, in the interim, ibn Sa'ūd proclaimed himself King of the Ḥijāz, the proceedings of the congress resolved themselves into a diplomatic duel between the representatives of Najd and Ḥijāz and the foreign delegates who expressed concern at the poor sanitary conditions of the country.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Congress also revealed numerous points of agreement between the delegates on a variety

---

<sup>1</sup>Revue du Monde Musulman, Vol. LXIV. (Paris, 1926), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 166 et seq. Also Gibb's Whither Islam?, p. 356.

of subjects touching upon the Muslim life, and thus laid a basis of common action.

The Jerusalem Congress of 1931 marked a distinct advance upon its predecessors because of the inclusion of a great number of "unofficial" representatives from various Muslim and non-Muslim countries. The large shi'ī participation was another interesting feature of the Congress. The Congress achieved a very substantial measure of success through its decision: a) on establishing a central bureau at Jerusalem to direct the work of Islamic propaganda, with local bureaus in the different countries; (b) a scheme of collections for the University of Jerusalem and for the defence of the Holy Places; (c) the establishment of an Arab agricultural bank in Palestine and (d) the creation of an international Arab Academy in Egypt.

Two general remarks can be made about these congresses. Firstly, in all these congresses, the majority of the members was made up of Arab delegates, a fact which naturally resulted in the concentration of Congress on the problems of Arab-Muslim world, rather than on those of the Muslim world in general. Secondly, in all the three Congresses, special care was exercised to set cultural objects in the foreground and to avoid interference in political issues. This was apparently aimed at preventing any rift between the Muslim peoples and their governments. But on a few, although important, occasions, this unwritten rule was disregarded. At the Cairo Congress of 1926 <sup>α</sup> the resolution was passed against the French bombardment of Damascus and at the Mecca Congress of the same

year another protest against the annexation of 'Aqabah and Ma'an to Trans-Jordan was made. A third example was the anti-Zionist line taken at the Jerusalem Congress of 1931.<sup>1</sup>

So much for the practical aspect of the aftermath of the ideas propounded by Afghānī, 'Abduh and Kawākibī. As for the movements of thought inspired by these ideas, one can say with certainty that throughout the period starting with the death of 'Abduh (1905) up to the second World War there has been only one outstanding figure of an Islamic thinker and reformist worthy of serious consideration: 'Alī 'Abd ar Rāziq. The controversy and furor caused by his well known book Islam and the Principles of Rule, (islām wa uṣūl al ḥukm), are only comparable to those aroused by Afghānī's agitations in Constantinople and Cairo. G. C. Adams, G. Kampffmeyer and Muhammad Jamāl Ahmed give us a fairly comprehensive account of Rāziq's life and ideas.<sup>2</sup> Here we concern ourselves with a number of facts in Rāziq's life, and especially a few points about his famous book, which are of some interest from our viewpoint.

Rāziq was born in a village of Middle Egypt in the year 1838. He entered the Azhar University when he was about ten years of age. According to Adams, Rāziq's relations with 'Abduh at the Azhar "would probably have been slight, because of his youth and his status as a beginner, had not the friendship which existed between his father and 'Abduh .... secured

---

<sup>1</sup> Whither Islam?, p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> See Adams' Islam and Modernism in Egypt, pp. 259-69, Whither Islam?, p. 142.

opportunities for personal acquaintance which he would otherwise not have enjoyed".<sup>1</sup> In 1900 he attended lectures, for a year or two, in the new Egyptian University.

Most important among the lectures attended were those of Professor Nallind, on the history of Arabic literature, and those of Professor Santillana on the history of philosophy. After obtaining his final certificate from the Azhar in 1911, he lectured in the Azhar on rhetoric and the history of its development as an Arabic science. In 1912 he went to England to study for a degree in Economics and political science at Oxford University. This provided him with an opportunity to make a closer study of the theories of government as well as of the ideas of a number of English political thinkers - as can be gathered from his above-mentioned book. His studies in England were interrupted by the Great War, whereupon he returned to Egypt. In 1915 he was appointed a judge in the Shari'ah Courts. This prompted him, as he himself says, to delve into the history of religious judicature.

"But judicature," he says, "in all its varieties, is a branch of government, and its history is closely linked up with the history of government. The religious judicature is likewise one of the departments of the Islamic government. It is therefore inevitable for he who studies the history of this (religious) judicature to scrutinize its superior organ, i.e. government in Islam."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Islam and Modernism, p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> al islām wa usūl al hukm, Second Edition, maṭba'ah miṣr, Cairo, 1925, p. "fa".



This was how the idea of writing Islam wa usūl al ḥukm came into his mind. The book, which was first published in 1925, is an indictment against the Caliphate which the author condemns as an anti-Islamic institution. It also draws a sharp distinction between the religious and political functions of Muḥammad. "It was only," he says, "with regard to the religious functions that Muḥammad acted as the prophet." The main conclusion of the book is that it is necessary to separate 'State' from 'Church' in Muslim countries. The concluding sentence of the book mirrors the forward-looking ideology of the author and his impatience with the present conditions of the Muslims:

"There is nothing in the religion (of Islam) which prevents the Muslims from competing with other nations for social and political science and from tearing down that antiquated ('atīq)<sup>1</sup> order to which they have been subjugated and under which they have been humbled, and to build up their state and government on the basis of the most recent achievements of minds of men and the most solid experiences of the nations as to the best foundations of government."<sup>2</sup>

It was in fact this sentence which was taken by most of Rāziq's critics as evidence of his opposition to Islam.

"The author (Rāziq)", wrote Shaikh Muḥammad Bakḥīt, in his voluminous book refuting Rāziq's ideas, "thus says clearly that the system on which the government of Abu Bakr and later of the Patriarchal (Rāshidīn) Caliphs was based is an inefficient and antiquated system because of its disconnection with social and political sciences, and that the achievement of minds of men are more elaborate and better than it. This amounts to the author's

---

<sup>1</sup>Adams' translation: "Ancient", op.cit., p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Islam wa usūl al ḥukm, p. 103.

negation of the fundamentals of Islamic Government and of what was set up by the Prophet of God . . . . compared with which nothing can be better and more elaborate, emanating as it is from the light of God."<sup>1</sup>

The Court of the Azhar 'ulamā' even went so far as to announce that the system of government for which Rāziq was pleading was, in fact, nothing other than Bolshevism.

"In addition", declared the Court, "to the denouncing of the religious foundation of the Muslim (system of government) and the revolting against their repeated collective consent (ijmā') with regard to their form of government, he takes the position of warranting their setting up of a Bolshevist State."<sup>2</sup>

"It is clear", concludes the Court, "that the fundamental of government and sources of legislation with the Muslims are the Book of God, the Tradition of the Prophet and the collective consent of the Muslims. For the Muslims, there can be nothing better than these (fundamentals and origins). Shaikh 'Ali (Rāziq) wants the Muslims to tear down what is based on these fundamentals."<sup>3</sup>

The reaction of the 'ulamā' of the Azhar University demonstrated with painful clarity that if they were slow and diffident in adapting their institutions to the demands of the age, they could be quite prompt and ruthless instead in supressing any challenge to the orthodoxy. Acting on the basis of Law No. 10 of 1911, which makes it incumbent on the Azhar University to censure 'all the 'ulamā' of Egypt for any behaviour not

---

<sup>1</sup> Shaikh Muhammad Bakhit, haqiqat 'al islām 'wa usūl al hukm, mataba'at as Salfiyah, Cairo, 1926, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> hukm hal'ah kibār al 'ulamā' fī kitāb al islām 'wa usūl al hukm, mataba'at salfiyah, Cairo, 1925, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

becoming their dignity as 'ulamā', a court consisting of twenty-four of the leading 'ulamā' of the Azhar decided, on August 12, 1925, to deprive Rāziq of his degree and his position as a judge.<sup>1</sup>

That Rāziq was inspired in his reformistic thoughts in the Islamic government partly by the ideas of a number of Western authors seems to be beyond any doubt. There are passing remarks in the islām 'wa usūl on the ideas of Hobbes and Locke about the origins of the authority of government.<sup>2</sup> He also refers the reader at one point to study Sir Thomas Arnold's The Caliphate for a fuller study of the nature of the Caliphate.<sup>3</sup> Last but not least, as has been noted by Adams,

"the influence of Western scholarship is seen in his critical methods and in his impatience with the methods of Islamic historians and biographers. In his attempt to treat his sources in a critical and scholarly manner, and in the concessions which he is willing to make to modern conditions, he shows his affinity with the more radical groups of Modernists....."<sup>4</sup>

Before closing this chapter, it would be worth our while, especially from the general viewpoint of this thesis, to attempt to answer an important question: What was the position of the Islamic revivalists

---

<sup>1</sup> hukm haiyah kibār al 'ulamā, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Islām 'wa usūl al hukm, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Islam and Modernism, p. 268. Rāziq has applied the same critical methods in his other useful, but rather academic, work on religious consensus called al ijma' fi 'sh shari'at' al islamiyah, dar al fikr al 'arabi, Cairo, 1947, p. 112.

with regard to nationalism, both in its particular (Egyptian or Syrian) and general (Arab) variants? There does not seem to be a uniformed policy on the part of the revivalists in regard to this problem. We have already seen Afghānī's opposition to all kinds of parochial and racial prejudice and his ideal of Islamic unity which stood in direct contradiction to any brands of narrow-minded nationalism. But 'Abduh's association with the 'Arabī Revolt (which in view of 'Abduh's Egyptian nationality, should not be regarded in the same light as Afghānī's association with it) has led most critics to describe him as a patriot. Besides, in an oft-quoted paragraph in his risālat 'at tawhīd he has recommended the love of fatherland.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere he defines the concept of watan in the following terms:

"Linguistically, watan means, without exception, the place where the person lives; it is synonymous with the word sakan: to say istautana al-qaum hadhihi al-ard wa tawattanuha is the same as saying 'they have made it their abode'. The word as used by those who study politics (ahl as-siyasa) means the place after which you are called, where your right is safeguarded, and the claim of which on you is known, where you are secure in yourself, your kin and your possessions. It has been said: 'There is no watan without freedom'. La Bruyere, the French philosopher said: 'There is no watan properly speaking, compatible with tyranny, but only private interests, personal glorification and exalted places: watan was defined by the ancient Romans as the place where the person has rights and political duties.

This latter Roman definition does not contradict the saying that there is no watan without freedom. They

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard Hartmann, Islam und Nationalismus, p. 23.

are indeed identical. Freedom is the right to fulfil the known duty, and if it does not exist there can be no watan, since there are no rights. When political duties exist, then they imply the existence of both right and duty, which are the motto of all the watans to which lives and possessions are sacrificed, and which are put before kin and friends; in generous souls, the love of watan reaches the height of adoration and passion.

But the abode where the dweller has no rights, and where he is secure neither in his life nor in his possessions, is, in short, the resort of the powerless, and the abode of him who can find no way to another; if it grows bigger, there is no ease, and if smaller, then life in it cannot become worse. La Bruyère, mentioned above, said: 'What is it to me that my watan be large and great, if I am sad and lowly in it, living in humility and misery, a prisoner and afraid'. But to belong to a certain watan means that a connexion links the watan to the person who dwells in it, a connexion based on personal honour; so that he will be jealous for it and will defend it as he defends his father after whom he is called, even if he is a bad-tempered and strict father. This is why it has been said that the relational ending 'i' in Misri, Inglizi, Fransawi, is of a kind which inspires regard and jealousy in the heart of the Egyptian for Egypt, of the Frenchman for France, and of the Englishman for England. This had been denied by some people, but this was no doubt due either to misunderstanding or to unclear exposition.

The conclusion of the matter is that there are three things in a watan which compel love, solicitude and vigilance for it. They are as follows: First, watan is the abode where there is food, protection, kin and children; Second, it is the place of rights and duties, which are the focal points of political life and the importance of which is obvious; Third, it is the place with which one is associated and through which man is exalted and honoured, or cast down and humbled; and this is purely spiritual."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Sylvia Haim, Islam and Arab Nationalism, op.cit., pp. 132-33.

As the patriotic movements in the Muslim countries in the nineteenth century were largely superseded by Pan-Islamism, no considerable conflict could have occurred at that stage between the adherents of the two schools. The situation was different in the first two decades of the twentieth century, which witnessed a rapid growth of patriotism in those countries. This was the cause of the resounding clash which occurred between people like Rashīd Riḍā, representing the 'Islamic' school, and Muṣṭafā Kāmil and Muḥammad Yūsain Haikal, representing the Egyptian patriotism. In an article entitled "The Propaganda of the Heresy in Egypt" in al manār, Riḍā vehemently denounced those

"Egyptian heretics who propagate nationalism, in its modern social meaning, which consists in distinguishing peoples and nations from one another and their being (divided by virtue of) limited homelands without taking into consideration far more comprehensive determining and rallying factors, such as religion and language.... (The heretics) count a Muslim and an Arab as foreigner if he is not related by kinship to Egypt. Thus the Sharīf of the Hijāz or of Syria is equal in their eyes with a heathen from China."

It must be noted, however, that Riḍā's opposition to Egyptian patriotism did not deter him from clamouring for the greater ideal of Arab unity. This he seems to have done not so much in his career as a writer and reformist as in his active life, especially through his membership of the ḥisb al lāmarkaṣīyat' al idāriyat' al uthmānī, a party

---

<sup>1</sup> al manār, May, 1926.

founded in Cairo in 1912 with the aim of securing the decentralization of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

But a more spirited and argued censuring of the nationalists was effected by Rāziq. Contrary to 'Abduh and Riḍā, Rāziq rejects all forms of nationalism - whether Arab or Egyptian. Firstly, he refutes the claim, later revived by theorists of Arab nationalism, that Islam is a religion destined to be glorified exclusively by the Arabs.

"Islam", he writes, "is a noble call made by God for the good of humanity, easterner and westerner, Arab and non-Arab, man and woman, poor and rich, learned and ignorant. It represents a religious unity, which was intended by God to bind all human beings together, and to embrace all the corners of the earth. Islam was not an Arab appeal, nor (did it represent) an Arab unity."<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, in keeping with his method of distinguishing between the religious and political components of Islamic history, he maintains that the unity engendered among the Arabs by Islam was of a religious and not a political character.

"The Arab unity", he says, "existing at the time of the Prophet was not a political unity whatsoever.... It was a unity of the faith and religion."<sup>3</sup>

The main result of this belief is to divorce Arab nationalism from its

<sup>1</sup>George Antonius, op.cit., p. 109. See also pp. 159-160. Richard Hartmann, Islam und Nationalismus, p. 35 and Arabische politische Gesellschaften bis 1914, in Beiträge Zur Arabistik, Semitistik und Islamwissenschaft, p. 454.

<sup>2</sup>Islām 'wa uṣūl al hukm, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

religious element, thus depriving it of one of its most vital and dynamic forces. Rāziq's assertion is therefore a blunt negation of the idea of Arab predominance.

As will be seen in a subsequent chapter, most of the modern theorists of Arab nationalism, both by design and by the force of circumstances, have adopted a line diametrically opposed to the essence of Rāziq's arguments: they have forged an indissoluble unity between Islam and Arab nationalism - a unity which has been strengthened and justified by the pressures of the West.



### III EGYPTIAN PATRIOTISM

Although Egyptian patriotism, in its narrow sense (and indeed any kind of local patriotism in the Arab world) goes against the grain of Arab nationalism, the fact remains that its emergence as a concrete political movement at the end of the nineteenth century made a great contribution, both in political thought and practice, to the present phase of Arab nationalism. Besides, the idea of the Arab watan (homeland) as the geographical manifestation of the ideal of Arab qawmiyah (nationalism) is no more than an extension of the narrower notion of the Egyptian watan. At least in so far as Arab consciousness is concerned Egyptian patriotism has thus added a new dimension to Arab political thought. No wonder that the memory of one of the chief leaders of Egyptian patriotism at the end of the nineteenth century, Muṣṭafā Kāmil, still remains a source of inspiration for many an Egyptian follower of Arab nationalism<sup>1</sup> - although Kāmil's ideas (as will be seen in the following pages) stand in sharp contradiction to the tenets of Arab nationalism.

---

If the quickened tempo of Westernization in both the material and spiritual lives of the Egyptians was one result of the British Occupation,

---

<sup>1</sup> Mohammed Nèguib, Egypt's Destiny, Victor Gollancz, London, 1955, p. 48.

the opposite process of the formation of an anti-British patriotic spirit was another result. The main components of such a spirit were all obtaining even before the Occupation. Reference has also been made to the emergence of a sophisticated, anti-British feeling immediately before and after the British Occupation. We have already noted Ṭaḥṭāwī's message of patriotism for the Egyptian Youth. But most important of all was the introduction of the European concept of 'nation' into the Arab mind. From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards the Arabic word waṭan started to assume the meaning of patrie throughout the Islamic world. The first Egyptian thinker who seems to have used the word with consciousness of its social and political senses was 'Abd Allāh Nadīm (1843-1896), one of the outstanding figures of the Egyptian cultural life in the nineteenth century, and the "Tyrtæus of the 'arābist movement".<sup>1</sup> Sammarco speaks of him as an excellent "organizer of patriotic groups, and an extremely energetic and resourceful man".<sup>2</sup> Being one of the active leaders of the 'Arābī Revolt he was exiled to Constantinople, where he stayed till the end of his life. An account of his life is given by his brother 'Abd al Fattāḥ Nadīm in the introduction to the book sulafāt an nadīm fī muntakhabāt as sayid 'abd allāh nadīm, published in Cairo in 1901, which

---

<sup>1</sup> H.A.R. Gibb, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature" in Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, Vol. IV, 1926-28, p. 755.

<sup>2</sup> Angelo Sammarco, Histoire de l'Égypte Moderne, l'Institut Français d'Archeologie Orientale, Vol. III, Cairo, 1937, p. 318.

contains long extracts from Nadīm's writings. One of his articles on the Arabic language, appearing in his journal al tankit wa'l tabkīt on June 6, 1831, identifies the idea of patrie (waṭan) with the language. He who loses his language, would also lose his waṭanīyah, nationality, and religious beliefs - such is the gist of his teachings.

"It is imperative", he said, "that the nation (umma) should found numerous schools and associations ... to teach the Arabic language and the lore of waṭan."<sup>1</sup>

Nadīm also wrote a play entitled al waṭan, which consists of a discussion between a reformist and a traditionalist. Waṭan is, in fact, the name of the main character in the play.

"The reform," says a character to Waṭan, "signifies the opening of schools, the diffusion of knowledge, the teaching of the sciences and arts which will bring prosperity, and will secure the power of the nation."<sup>2</sup>

Sammarco refers to the influence which the patriot Turkish writer, Namik Kemal (1840-1880), had made on Nadīm's nationalism. Kemal wrote a play called waṭan (a work of much higher theatrical value and poetical inspiration than Nadīm's al waṭan), the performance of which in Constantinople in 1876 was marked by an upsurge of Turkish patriotic feelings.<sup>3</sup>

Another author of the same period, Shaikh Ḥusain al Marṣafī (d. 1889), professor of the Azhar University and later lecturer in the

<sup>1</sup>Sammarco, op.cit., p. 319.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>3</sup>Richard Hartmann, Islam und nationalismus, p. 22, also pp. 30-36.

Arabic language at ġār al 'ulūm, wrote a treatise entitled al kalim ath thaman, devoted to the definitions of eight novel terms in Egyptian political terminology, which are umma (nation), waṭan (patrie), hukūmah (government), 'adl (justice), zulm (injustice), siyāḥ (politics), hurriyah (liberty), tarbiyah (education). The writer takes cognizance, not only of the linguistic meanings of these terms, but also of their philosophical, religious and social connotations. He describes waṭan as the dwelling-place of the nation<sup>1</sup> - a designation identical with that suggested by the classic writers. But his description of the term umma highlights his modernist outlook and approach. Umma is a community (jam'iyah) unified by the language (lisān), locale (makān) and religion (dīn). It is also to be noted that Marṣafī regards such notions as justice and morals as prerequisites for the salvation of the waṭan.<sup>2</sup>

Until the time of the British Occupation (1882), however, contemplations such as those of Nadīm and Marṣafī remained in the realm of pure thought, never able to affect the patterns of political action in Egypt. It was Muṣṭafā Kāmil who turned these lofty ideals of the Western civilization into the motivating forces of a truly nationalist movement in its Western sense. This was made possible by the shock administered

---

<sup>1</sup> Sylvia G. Haim, "Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism," in Die Welt des Islams, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> "Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism", op.cit., p. 322.

to the Egyptian mind by British occupation. Although, as has been rightly noted by Fritz Steppat, Kāmil was "a politician, and a propagandist" but "no theoretician, no thinker" (ein Politiker und Propagandist, kein Theoretiker, kein Denker),<sup>1</sup> his ideals were nevertheless instrumental, perhaps more than those of the "theoreticians and thinkers", in mobilising most of the nationalist agitations and demonstrations in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Moreover, as will be seen presently, the nature and evolution of Kāmil's ideas curiously epitomize most of the characteristics of the Arab nationalism of today. Kāmil was born in Cairo on August 14, 1874. He often spoke proudly of his 'noble fallāh blood'. His grandfather, As Sayid Muḥammad ibn 'Alī, was a rich grain dealer. His father 'Alī Efendī Muḥammad (1816-1886) belonged to that generation of middle class Egyptian youth who enjoyed the benefits of Muḥammad 'Alī's drive for modern education; 'Alī Efendī, after some preliminary studies in Islamic theology, pursued and completed his studies in the field of civil engineering. Kāmil's mother, Ḥafīzah, was the daughter of Captain Muḥammad Fahmī, a sayidah, a descendant of the Prophet. The whole family thus contained both the spirit of modern education of the Egyptian renaissance (an nahḍat' al miḡriyah) and the Islamic tradition.<sup>2</sup> Having completed his primary studies, Kāmil entered the

---

<sup>1</sup>Fritz Steppat, Nationalismus und Islam bei Muḥṣafa Kāmil, die Welt des Islams, IV, Leiden, 1956, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

Secondary School where he showed a keen interest in mathematics and the natural sciences. In 1891 he obtained his secondary school diploma and entered the State School of Law (madrasat' al huqūq): after successfully passing the examinations of the first year, he joined the French School of Law (École de Droit), which had just (1892) been established as a branch of the Paris University in Cairo.

One of the main formative factors of Kāmil's social and political outlook was his association with 'AbdAllah Nādīm, to whom we have just referred. This association enabled him to acquire first-hand knowledge of the 'Arabī Revolt (with which Nādīm was closely identified) and the causes of its failure. He drew three conclusions from Nādīm's account of the Revolt: In the first place, the army should not have been used as an instrument of political action; a patriotic movement should rather rely on the power of public opinion, on patriotism and moral education (at tarbiyat' al waṭaniyah wa'l akhlāqiyah) for consolidating the bases of liberty and democracy. Secondly, British 'intrigues' constituted one of the major hurdles in the way of Egypt's progress towards emancipation, and the only way of overcoming these was a sustained and implacable resistance to the Occupation. Thirdly, since the clash between the 'Arabites and the Khedive (Tawfīq 1879-1892) was one of the main causes of the failure of the Revolt, the nationalists should always try to forge understanding, and establish co-operation with the ruling Khedive.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>'Abd ar Raḥmān ar Rāfi'ī, Mustafa Kāmil, ba'ith al parakat' al waṭaniyah, maḥba'at' ash shūrāq, Cairo, 1939, pp. 30-31. Also Nationalismus und Islams, op.cit., p. 245.

But there was also another factor in Kāmil's intellectual life which was of far greater importance. According to the regulations of the Paris University, the examinations of the Cairo School of Law were to be held in Paris at the end of each year. Kāmil thus visited Paris three times to take these examinations. His first visit was in the summer of 1893 (from June 23 to July 29) and his second in the following summer of 1894, during which he successfully passed the examinations of the first and second years. He went to Paris for the third time in October of the same year to take the third year examinations, but was not allowed to do so as the regulations of the University prohibited the taking of two examinations within the same year. Therefore Kāmil went to Toulouse and finally succeeded in obtaining his Licence en Droit in November.

These visits broadened Kāmil's mind and

"taught him of the affairs of the nations and societies what he would not have known, familiarized him with circles of which he would not have had any idea, and brought him into contact with personalities whom he would not have met had he stayed in Egypt. His tour in Europe enhanced his status in the field of the nationalist campaign, won him international repute and enabled him to render the greatest services to the Egyptian cause ... There is no doubt that his connection with the French professors and journalists greatly benefited him from the scientific and spiritual standpoints, since French nationalism is the indisputable leader of the peoples who fight to revive (their) freedom and grandeur."<sup>1</sup>

The effect of those visits on Kāmil's mind was decisive. Kāmil returned to Egypt in December 1894 "determined to devote all his life to

---

<sup>1</sup> Abd ar Raḥmān ar Rāfi'ī, op.cit., p. 32.

the struggle for his country".<sup>1</sup> He practised as a lawyer for a while during which time he spent most of his time in meditating on and studying books on the Egyptian problem and international politics. The year 1895 marked the beginning of Kāmil's serious political activities. The account of an interview, published in al ahrām of January 28, between Kāmil and Colonel Baring, Lord Cromer's brother, the latter denouncing and the former praising the Occupation, caused quite a sensation in patriotic circles. Another article by him in al ahrām of March 4, criticizing Cromer's decision to set up special courts for dealing with those Egyptians committing crimes against the army of Occupation, was instrumental in rallying all the anti-British circles. In the same month (March 1895) he visited François Deloncle, a deputy of the French National Assembly, who had come to Egypt on a fact-finding mission. The meeting was turned into an occasion for arousing pro-French feelings in Alexandria and Cairo, and adding oil to the flame of the hatred against the British.<sup>2</sup> In May Kāmil went to Paris to inform the French public further about the situation in Egypt, and to win its support and sympathy for his country's grievances. In this task he enjoyed the assistance of a number of French personalities, among whom the most helpful was undoubtedly the writer Madam Juliette Lamber-Adam, a colleague of Gambetta and the founder of Nouvelle Revue, later to be known, according to

---

<sup>1</sup> Abd ar Raḥmān ar Rāfi'ī, op.cit., p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 42. Fritz Steppat, op.cit., p. 248.



Steppat, as Kāmil's beloved "mother" (reliebte "maman").<sup>1</sup>

In Toulouse and Paris Kāmil made a number of speeches in French which were all highly laudatory of the French, revealing the great hopes which the Egyptian nationalists pinned on France at the time in their anti-British struggle.

"We firmly hope", he said in his speech in Toulouse on July 4, 1895, "that France, who has nourished us with her sciences and her literature, will remain our loyal interprète by proving to the whole of Europe that we are capable of governing ourselves."<sup>2</sup>

There were times when he identified the interests of Egypt with those of France.

"In the public as well as private life (of Egypt)", he said in his speech of December 11th, 1895 in Paris, "whoever comes from France or has anything to do with France is (in the British eyes) an enemy, against whom everything is permissible. Suffice it to say that the Egyptian patriots who work for the liberation of their country are called 'The French Party' by the British, and that the patriotic press is branded 'the Franco-phil press'. These designations are dear to us, although they have been given to us by our enemies. They bring us this consoling certainty that the British themselves confess that we and the French have a common cause."<sup>3</sup>

But, as we shall presently see, his hopes in France were soon to be

<sup>1</sup>Nationalismus und Islam, p. 248. Mustafā Kāmil, p. 55 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Mostafa Kamel Pacha, Egyptiens et Anglais (with an introduction by Juliette Adam), Ferrin et Cie, Paris, 1906, p. 27. See also pp. 144 and 202.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

shattered by the Anglo-French entente of 1904.

Kāmil made other visits to Paris, Vienna, Berlin and Budapest in the following years, everywhere setting out his country's case before the European press and politicians. In January 1900 he founded the daily newspaper al liwā' (The Standard) which was soon to assume the leadership of the anti-British Campaign in the country. This was supplemented in February by a monthly review called majallat'al liwā'.<sup>1</sup> In 1905 he established a weekly magazine called al 'ālam al islāmī (The Islamic World) devoted to covering the events and developments in the Muslim countries, and especially to translating the articles which appeared in the European newspapers and journals on the problems of the Islamic world.<sup>1</sup>

But his most important contribution to the growth of nationalist sentiment was undoubtedly the creation of hizb al waṭanī (The Nationalist Party) in October 1907. This was not a party in the Western sense with a definite ideological stand and a distinct class background, although the "idea of creating a party on the model of the European political parties" had caught his imagination as early as 1902.<sup>2</sup> In view of its "little attention to economic matters" and its complete apathy to social problems<sup>3</sup> hizb al waṭanī was rather a front, a centre for rallying all

<sup>1</sup> Farūqī, op.cit., p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Landau, Parliamentary and Political Parties in Egypt, 1866-1924, (thesis), University of London, June, 1949, pp.213-214.

those who fought for ending the Occupation - so much so that it was often referred to as hizb al jalā' (the Evacuation Party).<sup>1</sup> The first congress of the Party held in December 1907 was attended by the representatives of all classes of the nation - "the notables, farmers, dignitaries, lawyers, physicians, engineers, industrialists etc."<sup>2</sup> As Steppat points out, despite the Nationalist Party's claim to be the genuine spokesman of Egyptian nationalism,<sup>3</sup> it was merely one of the many political organizations, such as Shaikh Alī Yusuf's Constitutional Reform Party (hizb al iṣlāh 'alā Maṭā'ī ad Ḍusturiya) and Ḥasan 'Abd ar Rāziq's People's Party (hizb al umma), which all pursued more or less similar aims.<sup>4</sup> But Kāmil's party was undoubtedly the most efficient of all in expressing the nationalists' demands. Two months after the creation of the Nationalist Party, on February 10, 1908, Kāmil died of intestinal tuberculosis.

---

It is now time to turn to Kāmil's basic ideas. Fritz Steppat has analysed these ideas under three main headings which we shall also retain in our survey here:-

---

<sup>1</sup>Rafi'ī, op.cit., p. 263.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Landau, op.cit., p. 207a.

<sup>4</sup>Nationalismus und Islam, p. 250.

1. The Concepts of Fatherland and Nation. Kāmil calls his ideology waṭāniyah (patriotism), which is love for one's fatherland (waṭan). Fatherland for Kāmil is Egypt. This is not a self-evident fact, since Muḥammad 'Alī's ambition of "carving out an Arab empire from the (Ottoman) Sultan's dominion" had created among his subjects a national spirit which was not necessarily confined to the borders of Egypt. In Syria he even tried to initiate, through his son Ibrāhīm Pasha, a movement in favour of Arab nationalism, based on the common history and language of the Arab peoples. The movement spread to Egypt, but died out as a result of Muḥammad 'Alī's failure to realise his political schemes. It was superseded by the emerging movement towards preserving Egypt's individuality within the Ottoman Empire. The British occupation acted as "the catalyst of a specifically Egyptian fatherland-consciousness"<sup>2</sup> represented by such men as Nadīm, Marṣafī, and now, Kāmil.

Although praising the value of the Arab heritage and even acknowledging a racial community (tajannus) between the Egyptians, Syrians and Hijazites, Kāmil regards the unity of the inhabitants of the Egyptian fatherland to be a fact of prime importance. He uses the term "Arab nation" only to designate the people living under the Caliphs of the early Arab-Islamic empire.<sup>3</sup> For him such a nation no longer exists.

---

<sup>1</sup> George Antonius, op.cit., p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> "Katalysator eines Spezifisch ägyptischen Vaterlands bewussteins." (Nationalismus und Islam, p. 252.)

<sup>3</sup> Égyptiens et Anglais, p. 196.

Also significant is his application of the word "Arab" only to the nomads of Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

A logical consequence of fatherland-consciousness is national consciousness. But contrary to the concept of fatherland, the concept of nation involves Kamil in a number of difficulties. His dilemma can be stated in the following terms: If the religion, i.e. Islam, is taken to be the main criterion of nationhood, he must then leave the Copts outside his definition of "the Egyptian nation". But if the concept of fatherland is maintained to be the determining factor of nationhood, this would then bring him into conflict with the mass of the Muslim inhabitants of the fatherland. In solving this dilemma, Kamil first calls to his aid Fichte's organic theory of the State and then tries to establish the complete compatibility between patriotism and religion. The human society, he says, is divided into groups of people (shu'ūb, plural of sha'b) between which there prevails a permanent struggle for power. When a group of people achieves its aim and acquires power, it is turned in the process, on the basis of common interest (al manfa'at al mushtarakah) between its members, into a nation (umma). Each nation should be viewed as a body in which the salvation of each member is dependant upon that of the other. The existence of a nation is placed in jeopardy whenever one of its sections falls victim to "the motive of

---

<sup>1</sup>Egyptiens et Anglais, p. 70.

ethnical divergence" (dā'ī tabā'ud al jinsī).<sup>1</sup> But if we accept that individual interests can be best secured through safe-guarding the common interests of all, then we must avoid all ethnical prejudice (at ta'assub al jinsī).<sup>2</sup> Kāmil proves his sincere belief in this principle when he comes to touch upon the national problem in its more concrete aspects. Who can be regarded as Egyptian? In answer to this question he first invokes the theory that nationality is an outgrowth of the geographical milieu. This, as Steppat tells us, is reminiscent of Ludwig Feuerbach's (1804-1872) materialistic thesis that the human spirit is a product of the material conditions of its environment<sup>3</sup> ("Der Mensch ist was er ist"). People who come to settle in a foreign land do not always remain there as foreigners. They become assimilated after a few generations. There is no prerequisite for their being regarded as "nationals" other than staying in the land for a long time. On the basis of this "geographical criterion" of nationality, Kāmil rejects, on the one hand, the Copts' claims to be the genuine Egyptians because of being the direct descendants of the Pharaohs,<sup>4</sup> and on the other, the Muslims' attitude in excluding the ethnical and religious minorities from the

---

<sup>1</sup> Steppat's translation: "Das Motiv den Gegenseitigen abstossung der Volkstümer" (p. 255)

<sup>2</sup> "Der Fanatismus der Etnischen Gruppen" (Ibid., p. 255.)

<sup>3</sup> Egyptiens et Anglais, p. 294.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

penumbra of the umma. He therefore deprecates 'Arabī's campaign against the Circassian officers who, in his view, should be regarded as Egyptians because of their long sojourn in Egypt.

Kāmil excepts one group of the inhabitants of Egypt from this comprehensive theory of nationality: these are what he calls ḍukhalā' (singular: ḍakhīl), or intruders. He applies this term especially to that group of Syrian journalists who, as we have seen before,<sup>1</sup> had chosen Egypt as a refuge against the tyrannical obscurantism of the Ottomans. His opposition to the ḍukhalā' seems to have arisen from the pro-British policy of some of these refugees in Egypt, among others Yaqūb Ṣarrūf, the founder of al muqtaṭam, which was set up in 1889 in Cairo with British subsidy.<sup>2</sup> Kāmil often lashed out at the ḍukhalā' and the traitors to national interests in the same breath.<sup>3</sup> However, al ahrām, founded by the Syrian Taqlā brothers, enjoyed his support and co-operation because of its Francophile line. But his opposition to Muslim Syrians like Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (other ḍukhalā' were mainly Christian) is understandable only in the general context of his attitude towards Islam, although Riḍā accused him of deliberately waging a war against the Syrians in Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>V. supra, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup>Nationalismus und Islam, p. 259.

<sup>3</sup>Egyptiens et Anglais, pp. 93, 163, 184, 187, 200 and 202.

<sup>4</sup>al manār, VI, p. 200 and IX, p. 69 et seq.

2. Kamil's Concept of Religion in its Relation to Nationalism. On the basis of the above analysis, Kamil saw no conflict between a man's religious and <sup>his</sup> patriotic loyalties.

"We in Egypt", he said, "form a united nation (umma mush-tarakah). Some of us are Copts, and a greater number are Muslims. We have two great duties, one religious and one patriotic. The religious duty requires the Copts to guard and strengthen their beliefs. They should not be blamed if they sympathize with their religious brothers. The Muslims are required by virtue of their religious duty to return to the correct principles of Islam, observe both its instructions and prohibitions, and preserve their unity. They should not be blamed either if they express sympathy with their brothers of faith in the other parts of the world."

But if the Muslims and Copts have different religious duties, they are bound by only one patriotic duty, which is to serve the "beloved fatherland and struggle for its independence and freedom".<sup>1</sup> Kamil thus believes in a dual loyalty: one towards religion and the other towards fatherland. This does not imply his advocacy of laicism. On the contrary, he appeals for the closest possible association between religion and state in Egypt. He justifies this appeal on the grounds that the West has acquired its present power only through upholding its religious beliefs.<sup>2</sup> But there is no doubt that Islam for him is merely an instrument in the service of nationalism. His own religious feelings, as Steppat points out, had a superficial character. Against his father's

---

<sup>1</sup> Nationalismus und Islam, p. 267. See also, Landau, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 268. Egyptiens et Anglais, p. 206.



wish he refused to resume his studies at the Azhar, as the modernist, Westernized way of education had proved for him much more attractive.<sup>1</sup> He did not, however, turn out to be an agnostic or, like the Turkish modernist Zia Gökalp, a religious sceptic. His utilitarian,<sup>2</sup> rather than doctrinal, approach to religion is especially borne out by his attitude towards the Ottoman sovereignty over Egypt. Kāmil invokes the principle of Islamic solidarity mainly to vindicate that sovereignty which was, in his opinion, a counter-poise to the British presence in Egypt and therefore offered chances of his country's emancipation.<sup>3</sup>

It is noteworthy that Kāmil never allowed the spirit of Islamic solidarity to interfere with the issue of Egyptian national unity. That is why, on some occasions, he speaks of religion in general. Point 5 of the Programme of his Nationalist Party calls for "propagation of sound principles of religion"<sup>4</sup> - without any qualification. It was thanks to this broadminded approach that he made the greatest achievement of his lifetime - the removal of the religious obstacles in the way of the unity of the Egyptian people.<sup>5</sup>

But despite his appeal for sound religious principles and his Westernized outlook, Kāmil was engaged in a fierce dispute with the Islamic

---

<sup>1</sup>Nationalismus und Islam, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>3</sup>Égyptiens et Anglais, p. 180 et seq., p. 247. Mustafā Kāmil, p. 339 et seq.

<sup>4</sup>Landau, op.cit., p. 411.

<sup>5</sup>Nationalismus und Islam, p. 274. Landau, op.cit., pp. 217-218.

revivalists. The dispute was partly due to the doctrinal conflict between the nationalists and Pan-Islamists, as referred to elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

But it was partly due also to Kāmil's personal opposition to such revivalists as 'Abduh, who had adopted a pacifist attitude towards the Occupation, and concentrated on the reform of Islam. This opposition led him so far as to cause him to take a reactionary stand against the movement for the abolition of the veil, merely because it was initiated by Qāsim Amīn, one of 'Abduh's disciples.

3. Attitude towards Western Civilization. So far as Kāmil's attitude towards Western civilization is concerned, we might discern two distinct periods in his life. The first period dates from the beginning of his active political life (1895) up to the conclusion of Anglo-French entente of 1904 and the second, from 1904 up to the end of his life (February 1908). It must be noted that in both periods the central point in Kāmil's thoughts on the West is, as will be presently seen, the British Occupation of Egypt. During the first period, Kāmil should be considered as one of the firm protagonists of the Westernization of Egypt. France, as has been hinted before, is for him the standard-bearer of Western civilization. In his first letter to his brother from Paris, he writes:

"I wish you were with me here in this land of knowledge to see the comfort of the people and their way of living. I pray to God that our people and our country may achieve the same status."

He calls upon the Egyptian people to struggle hard so that they may enjoy the same culture, the same strength and the same civilization as the Western nations. Kamil regards patriotism and nationalism as two instances of "the useful knowledge" which Europe has taught him. He expresses passionate admiration for such Western heroes of patriotism as Jeanne d'Arc, Franklin and Washington, Garibaldi and Cavour, and Kossuth.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Kamil justifies most of his ideals by referring to Western civilization. Patriotism is a noble duty because Pasteur admired it;<sup>2</sup> Muslims should show solidarity, because the Christians in Europe do so.<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary government is the only remedy for Egypt's ills, because his friends in Paris are of this opinion.<sup>4</sup> Finally, throughout this period, Kamil is at pains to impress upon the Egyptians that the misdeeds of the British in Egypt should not be put down to Western civilization.<sup>5</sup> He does this through emphasizing the support and sympathy which other European nations, especially France and Russia, express for the Egyptians. Hoping that France and Russia would eventually interfere in favour of Egypt, against Britain, he announces that:

---

<sup>1</sup> Nationalismus, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> Egyptiens et Anglais, p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Nationalismus, p. 330.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 301.

"The whole of Europe stands by our side....."<sup>1</sup>

"The whole of Europe is judge in our case: may she announce finally her supreme judgment! It is bound to be in our favour."<sup>2</sup>

The Anglo-French entente of 1904 wrought deep changes in Kāmil's thoughts. Under this agreement France, already humiliated by the Fashoda affair (December 1898), abandoned her interests in Egypt. This was a shattering blow to the high hopes of Kāmil and, in fact, to all the Egyptian patriots. Disillusioned by the defection of France, he lost his trust in the "whole of Europe" and his optimism in the underlying concepts of Western civilisation. Kāmil used to say once that:

"Without Europe, Egypt can not exist."<sup>3</sup>

Now he said:

"We cannot count on Europe."<sup>4</sup>

"Until today we thought that the aim of the European civilization is real equality and genuine justice .... For a hundred years we respected and extolled the Europeans, imbibed their sciences and wisdom with the utmost willingness.... But we have been betrayed, and robbed of the greater part of our power and prestige. There is no course now open for us but to learn from the past and thereby prepare ourselves for the future."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nationalismus, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> Egyptiens et Anglais, p. 78, also pp. 153-173.

<sup>3</sup> Nationalismus, p. 305.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 306. See also Muṣṭafa Kāmil, pp. 174-5.

Worse than mistrust in the West was Kamil's coming round to the Pan-Islamists' position to view the East-West tension mainly as a symptom of the conflict between Islam and Christianity. He now maintained that the unjust and inhuman policy of the West towards the Oriental countries emanated from its anti-Islamic fanaticism. "Europe", he declared in unison with Sultan 'Abdul Hamid, "is waging a Crusade in power politics against us".<sup>1</sup> It was not surprising that as a consequence of this pessimism, Kamil should now even denigrate the material achievements of Western civilization, and express preference for the moral and spiritual progress of man as the basis of the real civilization - a condition which he found missing in the Western world.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, as Steppat remarks, Kamil did not allow his anti-Western irruption to go very far. He warned the Egyptian people even at the height of his disappointment, against holding the Europeans and Christians residing in Egypt responsible for European politics, and advises them strongly against entertaining any idea of isolation from the outside world.<sup>3</sup>

Kamil's patriotism was in complete unison with the chief tenor of European nationalism in the nineteenth century which was, as remarked by

<sup>1</sup> Nationalismus, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Egyptiens et Anglais, pp. 215, 315-317.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 314.

H. G. Wells, "the legitimate claim of every nation to complete sovereignty, the claim of every nation to manage all its affairs within its own territory, regardless of any other nation".<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to Muṣṭafā Kāmil, patriotism in Egypt was turned from the apanage of a small, sophisticated elite into the common conviction of the masses. The nationalist movement which swept over Egypt in less than two decades after Kāmil's death (1918: the year of the formation of the Wafd Party) unmistakably carried the stamp of Kāmil's thoughts in so far as the struggle for self-determination and the efforts towards promoting national consciousness were concerned.<sup>2</sup>

Since Kāmil's death there have been a number of men in Egypt who have tried to further the Egyptian patriotic consciousness through a much more elaborate and thoughtful way than the mere arousing of emotions. Perhaps their best representative has been Aḥmad Luṭfī as Sayfī (1872 - 1963) once the editor of the paper al Jarīdah (1907-1915) and the ex-Chancellor of the University of Cairo.<sup>3</sup> His endeavours to educate an enlightened generation of Egyptian patriotic youth have won him the title of the

---

<sup>1</sup> The Outlines of History, New York, 1920, II, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Z. Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1957, p. 83, also pp. 32-33.

<sup>3</sup> Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, The Intellectual Origins, p. 35 et seq., where a full account of Luṭfī's life and works has been given.

"teacher of the generation".<sup>1</sup> But, unfortunately, this very emphasis on education and the policy of "the gradual development of new habits of thought and new qualities of character"<sup>2</sup> has made Lutfi and men like him have little bearing on the course of events and movements in their country and in the Arab World in general. This, of course, is not to deny its eventual and enduring impact on the creation of national consciousness.

### Conclusion

The foregoing chapter has tried to show how the Arabs, in their search for a new frame to replace that of their old disintegrating society, resorted to the various formulas provided by the West in the nineteenth century. First they tried to adopt the Western ways of life in toto. Then they turned inwards and attempted to revive and revitalize the principles of their religion. Finally they sought the solution to their problem in patriotism - and as will be seen in the following chapter - in a comprehensive unity.

We have analysed this impact of the West on Arab thought through studying the three major trends: - of Westernization, Islamic revivalism

---

<sup>1</sup> Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, op.cit., p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

and Egyptian patriotism. These three trends converged upon one another during the first two decades of the twentieth century to launch the movement of Arab unity. In propounding the idea of Arab unity, its advocates fell back on the precepts of these three trends; for them, everything associated with the upheavals, convulsions and evolutions of the old society - from the educationalism of Ṭaḥṭāwī, through the Pan-Islamism of Afghānī to the feminism of Amīn and Zahāwī - offered immense help. From the Westernizers they borrowed the basic notions and principles of social and political reform; from the Islamic revivalists they adopted the moulds into which their "syncretive" arguments were to be cast; and through the Egyptian patriots they became familiar with the notion of natric, i.e., the sense of territorial allegiance as a necessary prerequisite to their nationalism.

It can be said that Arab nationalism is thus a synthesis of all the above trends. But we must at once add two important riders. Firstly, that this synthesis is far from being consummate as the struggle between its constituting thesis and antithesis is still being carried out. This fact undoubtedly accounts for the state of relentless crisis which has beset the Arab mind in the past, as well as at present. Secondly, in the synthesis thus emerging, the antithetical elements have sometimes as much positive effect as the congenial ones. The views, for instance, of Ṭahā Husain, maintaining that Egypt was part of Europe rather than of the Orient, helped the Arab nationalists through weakening the Muslim traditionalists (the bigoted Azharites) and the revivalists (Rashīd Riḍā)



who were once united by their opposition to any specifically Arab movement.

Nor does the emergence of this synthesis mean that the trends of Westernization, Islamic revivalism and patriotism have lost their individuality in the vortex of Arab nationalism. On the contrary, they have continued to retain, though in varying degrees, their respective grounds and contributed to Arab nationalism, directly and indirectly, on the emotional and doctrinal levels.

---

Although, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the concept of Arab unity was never absent from the thinking of the leaders of the Arab awakening (we saw its examples in the works of Ṭahṭāwī, Ṣannū' and Kawākibī) the fact remains that it was often stated and advocated, not as a distinct ideal, but rather as part of a more general desideratum. From the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 onwards, Arab unity started to manifest itself independently of all the other contemporaneous movements and ideals. But if the idea and philosophy of unity had its intellectual origins in Egypt, its emergence as a political movement was to take place in another Arab country - in Syria.

UNITY

Chapter Three

THE CALL FOR UNITY

In a sense, Arab nationalism represents just another Arab attempt at finding a solution to the overwhelming problems raised by the dissolution of the traditional society, to which reference was made in the previous chapter. By the first decade of the Twentieth Century all the solutions presenting themselves to the lively, forward-looking Arab mind had proved to be of no avail: Westernization had precipitated, rather than prevented, the inner, social dislocation; Islamic revivalism had transpired to be only a means of buttressing the Ottoman tyranny and, finally, local patriotism had proved to be impotent in the face of hostile Western powers. The very danger that had originally motivated the recourse to these solutions now appeared to be more imminent and more crushing than ever: 'the danger of the complete destruction of the principles of loyalty upon which the traditional society had rested: the membership of the family, the tribe and the religious community, respect for the past, the habit of obedience to the suzerain'.

"It was to avoid this danger," says Albert Hourani, "that the nationalists endeavoured to arouse a consciousness of the common heritage of language, history, orical memories and customs shared by the Arabs; and to make that consciousness the basis of political action and ultimately of government."

---

<sup>1</sup>Syria and Lebanon, p. 99.

The call for Arab unity as a political ideal came originally from Syria<sup>1</sup> during the first decade of the Twentieth Century. Authorities differ as to the factors which made Syria the cradle of the Arab nationalist movement. Some authors, among them Favez Sayegh, have sought these factors in what we may call the mystique of Syrian history.

"Many factors," says Sayegh, "contributed to this phenomenon. Some were immediate, others, deep rooted in the distant past."

"In the Fertile Crescent, the process of Arabisation has gone further than elsewhere in the Arab World. Semitic migration from the Arabian peninsula has rendered the association between the peninsula and the Fertile Crescent since the dawn of history more intimate and vital than the association between the peninsula and any other sector of the Arab world.... In addition to having had this long and vital demographic association with the Arabian peninsula, the Fertile Crescent had also been the seat of the Arab Caliphate in its height...."<sup>2</sup>

Other authors take a less abstract line and ascribe the emergence of nationalist movement in Syria to specific political and social conditions prevailing in the Arab parts of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. The most salient of these conditions may

---

<sup>1</sup>Except where otherwise stated, the term Syria in this chapter is applied to what has been referred to by the Arab geographers as ash sham, i.e. the area comprising those lands which came to be later known as Palestine, Transjordan, the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Syria proper.

<sup>2</sup>Arab Unity, p.45.

be briefly noticed.

First and foremost was the "Turanian Chauvinism"<sup>1</sup> of the Young Turks from the time of the 1908 Revolution onwards. Evidently, of all the Arab lands, it was Syria who was subjected to the full blast of that Chauvinism; Egypt maintained merely nominal bonds with Constantinople and, moreover, the British Occupation had precluded any Ottoman interference. So long as the Arab and Turkish intellectuals were suffering equally from the "Hamidian despotism"<sup>2</sup> - a fact which resulted in their co-operation within the Committee of Union and Progress<sup>3</sup> - that despotism could not have evoked a specifically Arab reaction. But when, to the disappointment of the Arab sympathizers of the 'Committee of Union and Progress', the 'Young Turks Revolution' of 1908 served only to temper Turkish despotism with a blatant, deliberate anti-Arabism,<sup>4</sup> then the opposition to the regime was bound to shrink within the Arab - i.e. Syrian - sections of the empire.

"As a result," says Zeine, "of the Young Turks' Turkifying program, the Arab leaders' objective of gaining full national independence received a great stimulus which consolidated it. As far as Arab political nationalism is concerned, it can safely be asserted

---

<sup>1</sup> Zeine, Arab-Turkish Relations, p. 73 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Antonius, op.cit., p. 61 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 101 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Hartmann, "Arabische Politische Gesellschaften bis 1914" in Beiträge zur Arabistik, op.cit., p. 454.

that it was the national and racial policy of the Young Turks which fanned its flames."<sup>1</sup>

This Arab reaction to Turanian chauvinism would have been less passionate and articulate than it was had it not been for two factors; the gradual Syrian awakening to their Arab identity among the Ottoman citizens and the double plight of the Christians consisting of their inferior legal status within the Ottoman society together with embroilment, in religious differences, differences among themselves and with the Muslims.<sup>2</sup> The ideal of Arab unity offered the Christians "the only way of escape"<sup>3</sup> from both these predicaments. Reference was made in the preceding chapter to the enlightening functions of the first Western institutions created in Syria mainly through American and French efforts. Taking advantage of the favourable material and spiritual conditions created by such efforts, two societies were set up in Beirut, one in 1847 under the name of the Society of Arts and Sciences, the other in 1857 called the Syrian Scientific Society (al jam'iyat' al 'ilmiyat' as sūriyah), both

---

<sup>1</sup> The Arab Turkish Relations, pp. 79-80. It is interesting to note that one of the numerous Arab nationalist groups which sprang up after the Young Turk Revolution was called al qaḥṭāniyah - from the name Qaḥṭān, one of the legendary ancestors of the Arab race; a reference to the desire for Arab return to pre-Islamic origins, analogous to the return of the Turkish nationalists to pre-Islamic common ancestors like Turan. (Dr. Saab, The Arab Federalists, p. 250. For a full analysis of the Arab nationalist societies during the first decade of the Twentieth Century see Antonius' The Arab Awakening, pp. 101-125 and Dr. Saab's above mentioned book p. 225 et seq.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Richard Hartmann, Islam und Nationalismus, op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> A. H. Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, p. 104.

with the declared aim of "promoting knowledge by an organized collective effort".<sup>1</sup> The main personalities behind these societies were Ibrāhīm Yāzījī (1800-1871) and Butrus Bustānī (1819-1884), both Christian Arabs and eminent literary figures.<sup>2</sup> Both societies, besides spreading education, brought a great number of Syrian intellectuals into contact with Western culture. Both did a great deal to foster national feelings among the Arabs.<sup>3</sup> By concentrating their efforts on promoting the Arabic language, the leaders of these societies had indeed attacked the problem of Arab sociopolitical decline from the right angle.<sup>4</sup>

Between the rise of Muḥammad 'Alī in Egypt (1805) and the British Occupation of that country (1882), the movement of ideas in both Egypt and Syria, "so far as the Arabic cultural revival and the birth of Arab national consciousness went",<sup>5</sup> marched hand in hand. From the Occupation

<sup>1</sup> Antonius, op.cit., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 45-51. Bustānī has been identified by some writers with the beginnings of Arab ~~the~~ nationalism. "Under the influence of European and American missionaries," writes Dr. Saab, "and the impact of the Christian general hostility to the Empire, the Christian Arabs of Lebanon and Beirut indeed have a clearer concept of Arab nationalism. This appears in a lecture given by the Lebanese author Butrus el-Bustani in Beirut in 1839. The lecture was about Arabic literature, and to designate Arabs as distinct from non-Arabs, el-Bustani used the common term 'sons of Arabs' (abna el arab). After drawing a parallel between the greatness of the Arabs and the decadence of their sons, el-Bustani rebuked the sons for their reliance on what their Arab ancestors achieved.... He asked for more borrowing from foreign cultures and assailed those who pretended that the Arabs have everything they need in their own culture." (The Arab Federalists of the Ottoman Empire, p. 201.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> See below.

<sup>5</sup> Antonius, op.cit., pp. 99-100.

onwards, divergent political interests between the two peoples gradually weakened these collateral movements. To stand up to the British pressure, the Egyptian leaders adopted two lines of policy. Externally they continued, as we saw in the case of Muṣṭafā Kāmil, to express loyalty to the Ottoman Caliph in the name of Pan-Islamism. This was no doubt a tactical move necessitated by the finesse of power politics. Internally, they invoked the idea of Egyptian waṭan (patrie) and waṭaniyah (patriotism). The matter was not so simple for the Syrians. They were engaged in a bitter and bloody fight against the Ottomans and therefore the idea of truckling to the Caliph for the sake of Islamic unity was out of the question. Nor could they fall back on the idea of waṭaniyah, since there was no such thing as the Syrian waṭan. Syria had been throughout a part of the Empire and the concept of a Syrian homeland was therefore alien and incomprehensible to the mass of her inhabitants. It was otherwise with Egypt who, since Muḥammad 'Alī had achieved an increasingly distinct status within the Ottoman Empire. Besides, the variegated composition of the inhabitants of geographical Syria, made up of such religiously and socially divergent sections as the Sunnīs, Shi'īs, Druzes, 'Alawīs, Kurds and Ismā'īlīs<sup>1</sup> (not to speak of the Christian minorities) seriously undermined any feeling of specific 'Syrian solidarity'.

But the Syrian leaders managed to make up for these shortcomings by presenting an idea which, especially in the light of recent literary re-

---

<sup>1</sup>Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, pp. 121-145.



vival, possessed infinite attraction for their people: that of the Arab umma and, as its corollary, of the Arab qawmiyah (nationalism),<sup>1</sup> transcending all denominational differences. If the Syrians could not legally claim a distinct nationality for themselves because of their being Ottoman citizens they could, instead, by virtue of their language and their historical heritage, regard themselves as members of the Arab umma. Besides, by extending the principal ideas of Egyptian wataniyah, as propounded by Ṭabṭāwī, Nadīm, Marṣafī and Kāmil, beyond the confines of a specific homeland, they could also lay claim to an Arab watan. It is in the context of all these considerations that such realities of the Arab world at the beginning of the twentieth century as the general apathy of the Syrians towards the idea of Islamic unity, and the Christians' leadership of the Arab nationalist movement, can make sense. The idea of Arab unity, as launched by the Syrians, besides being the outgrowth of a historical process within the Arab-Muslim world, entailed also a position of immense tactical value. It offered attraction to millions of other Arabs who were reeling under the blows of Ottoman tyranny and, therefore, constituted a major external prop for the Syrian nationalists.

Nevertheless, it must not be thought <sup>Kaif</sup> there was a complete rupture between the Syrian-Arab nationalists and Egyptian patriots. Cairo never ceased to be the centre of Syrian/Arab nationalists and their intrigues

---

<sup>1</sup>Walther Braune, "Die Entwicklung des Nationalismus" in Beiträge, pp. 434-435.

1  
against the Ottomans.

As a representative of earlier Syrian protagonists of the idea of Arab unity in Egypt, one might perhaps mention 'Adīb Iṣḥāq (1856-1885), an eminent poet and writer, and one of the leaders of modern nationalism in the nineteenth century Egypt. Iṣḥāq appealed for a laic nationalism, mainly based on the rallying bonds of language, race and patriotism. In an article entitled dawlat 'al 'arab (Arab government) he once wrote:

"What harm would it do the leaders of this umma if they made contact with one another and arranged for a meeting between themselves in which they would converse, negotiate and declare their aims with a united voice, as if they spoke with the same mouth.... Do they think that such a voice would find no echo, or do they fear that their efforts might go to waste? Or do they not know that such a gathering [which should be] free from all religious bonds, exclusively based on ethno-linguistic (linsīyah) and patriotic relationship ('asabīyah) and composed of most of the Arab sects (nihal), would create a sensation in the world, and would bring [other] governments over to its side either through sympathy or through fear, thus returning to the Arabs the waif which they look for, and conferring upon them the rights which they demand, and on their leaders 'nor fear shall come, nor grief'."2

Another link between Arab nationalists and Egyptian patriots was Paris which, almost until the French Occupation of Syria (1920) was the cultural "Kaaba" of the Egyptian and Syrian intellectuals as well as the focus of all manner of Arab patriotic and nationalist activities.

---

1 Antonius, op. cit., p. 107 et seq.

2 'Awnī Iṣḥāq, ad durar, maktahat 'al 'arab, Beirut, 1909, p. 200 et seq.

The period roughly starting from the beginning of the Twentieth Century and ending in 1939 witnessed the growth of the idea of Arab unity. But unlike the nineteenth century which, as seen in the previous chapter, was mainly the epoch of writers, thinkers and reformers, this was the period of agitators, plotters and fighters. Even those Arab intellectuals who could be considered as the leading sophisticated souls of the nationalist movement in the period possessed also the qualities of devoted, down-to-earth militants.

A typical figure of the movement up to the Arab Revolt was the Christian Syrian, Najīb 'Azūrī. It is thanks to his lifelong friend and colleague, Eugène Jung, the former French vice-résident in Tenkin, that the major facts of his life are known. 'Azūrī was educated in France and obtained his diploma at the age of twenty from École des Hautes Études.<sup>1</sup> He then returned to Jerusalem, where he stayed for six years and of which he eventually became Deputy Governor. But in July 1904 we find 'Azūrī condemned to death by the Turks in absentia "because of having left his position without permission and having gone to Paris where he has engaged in activities detrimental to the existence of the State".<sup>2</sup>

His main achievement in Paris, which soon won him a considerable renown in the Arab world as well as in the interested European circles, was the creation of the Ligue de la Patrie Arabe. The programme of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Eugène Jung, La Révolte Arabe, I, Librairie Colbert, Paris, 1924, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

League is a significant document so far as it throws light on the initial Arab stand in their relations with the Ottoman Empire, and on their solution for the problem of the Caliphate. There are two French versions of this programme available to us. The first, which is the translation of an Arabic original, is addressed to the Arab peoples; the second version is mainly intended for the European and American public. On the Arab relation with the Ottoman Empire both the versions of the programme are identical, both appealing for a complete rupture. But on the question of the Caliphate, there is a meaningful difference between them. Whereas the first version does not state clearly whether the future Arab sultan would wield religious power or not ("Notre souverain sera Arab et Musulman"<sup>1</sup>), the second version stipulates that

"Le vilayet actuel du Hédjaz formera, avec le territoire de Médine, un empire indépendant et dont le souverain sera en même temps le Calife religieux de tous les Musulman. Ainsi une grande difficulté, la séparation du pouvoir civil du pouvoir religieux dans l'Islam, aura été résolue pour le plus grand bien de tous."<sup>2</sup>

This difference should be put down, on the one hand, to 'Azūri's diffidence in expressing openly his laic outlook, formed in the anti-clerical atmosphere of France and, on the other, to his desire to secure European, and primarily French, support for his schemes by promising an irreligious character to the future independent Arab state.

---

<sup>1</sup>"Dokumente zum Kampf der Araber um ihre Unabhangigkeit" in Die Welt des Islams, VIII, 1923-1926, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

'Azūrī's rich French background in education was a decisive factor in his political career. In 1905, while in Paris, he published a book entitled Le Réveil de la Nation Arabe dans l'Asie Turque (Libraire Plon, Paris) an account of the social and political plight of the Syrian Arabs under the Ottomans. Saṭī' al Huṣrī has singled out this book as an example of the first Arab effort to secede from the Ottoman Empire. The book made two major suggestions with regard to the future of the Arab world. The first was the unification of all Catholic churches in Syria under the name of the Arab Catholic Church and the second the secession of the Arab vilayets from the Ottoman State with the Hijaz as the seat of an Arab Muslim Caliphate and with Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine forming a united secular State<sup>1</sup> - i.e. the gist of the programme of 'Azūrī's League. Jung also has mentioned Le Réveil, together with his own Les Puissances devant la Révolte Arabe<sup>2</sup> (Hachette, Paris, 1906), as two main works which apprised the world of the existence of the Arab

---

<sup>1</sup> Saṭī' al Huṣrī, al bilād al 'arabiyyah wa'l dawlat' al 'Uthmāniyyah, dār al 'Ilm l'il mala'in, Beirut, 1960, pp. 125-126.

<sup>2</sup> The Times' review of this book on August 24, 1906, shows the similarity between Jung's thesis and 'Azūrī's Programme of the League. Jung's proposition, writes The Times, "is nothing else than the revival or construction of a great empire. This is the solution of the problem of the Middle East." "M. Jung proposes nothing less than the reconstitution of the Wahabite kingdom supported by European powers, enlarged by the addition of the Arabs now subject to Turkey, stretching from Egypt to Persia, from Aden to Asia Minor." "A solution of the religious difficulty, even more delicate in the East than in the West, is proposed. The Mussulman Pope, the Cherif of Mecca, is to have an independent Papal State, the Hedjaz. Religion is to be freed from lay entanglement by depriving the Sultan of the Caliphate and giving it to him. (Cherif of Mecca)."

nation.<sup>1</sup>

'Azūrī's other achievement in Paris, again with the help of Jung, was the publication of a monthly review called l'Indépendance Arabe of which the first issue appeared in April 1907 and the last in September 1908. In the following pages, we try to infer the main features of 'Azūrī's nationalist thought from the contents of the fifteen issues of this review.

The suffering of the Syrian Arabs constitute the main concern of 'Azūrī. Nothing else can so much arouse his feelings and stimulate his journalistic abilities. He holds Syria to be entrusted with the mission of liberating all Arabs.

"The complete and definite emancipation," he says, "of the whole of the Arabian peninsula, is closely tied up with the fate of Syria."<sup>2</sup>

and

"It is understood among our compatriots and friends that we should concentrate our most laborious efforts on the Syrian provinces of Jerusalem, Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo and Adana."<sup>3</sup>

Numerous articles in the issues of l'Indépendance are devoted to setting out the profound racial, cultural and political rifts between the Syrian Arabs and their Turkish oppressors. 'Azūrī therefore clamours

<sup>1</sup>La Revote, pp. 9-10.

<sup>2</sup>l'Indépendance, April 1907, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

for Syrian independence both on grounds of humane considerations<sup>1</sup> and political expediency.<sup>2</sup> But 'Azūrī is particularly anxious to see a united front of Syrian Arabs - whether Muslim or Christian - in the face of the Ottoman tyranny.

"The painful convulsions," he says, "in which our unfortunate land (veys) is floundering allow us to detect the Turks' intention to rekindle, before they are expelled, our ancient internecine discords; they thus want to make us fall upon one another, so that they might be able to consolidate their shaky tyranny through exploiting the ignorance and the worst instincts which can be found in all peoples."<sup>3</sup>

It is an indication of 'Azūrī's genuine Arabism that he takes equal interest in the rebellious stand of the other Arabs against the Ottomans, especially that of 'Abd al 'Azīz Ibn Sa'ūd in the Najd and Imām Yahyā in the Yemen, whom he describes as a "true Arab".<sup>4</sup> He in fact regards only the "Asiatic Arabs" as "the Arabs proper" and refers to the Egyptians, Tunisians, Moroccans and others merely as "Africans who speak our language".<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>An article by Victor Berard in l'Indépendance of June 1907, after explaining the Arabs' cultural superiority over the Turks, concludes by saying that: "Neither fusion nor even understanding has ever been possible between the Turks and the Arabs; the contrast between these two races, these two languages and these two temperaments is too great."

<sup>2</sup>In an article entitled l'Autonomie de Syrie by Ludovic de Contenson the case has been put forward for the creation of an autonomous buffer-state in Syria in order to prevent a clash between the ambitions of Germany and "the dissolving intrigues" of Britain in regard to the Ottoman Empire. This, says the writer, is the task of France as her contribution to maintaining world peace. (l'Indépendance, May 1907, p. 19.)

<sup>3</sup>l'Indépendance, May 1907, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Certainly the most significant feature of 'Āzūrī's Arab nationalism is its conflict with Egyptian patriotism. Of the various patriotic groups in Egypt it was naturally Muṣṭafā Kāmil's Hizb al Waṭanī which received his sharpest attacks. The main point of conflict was the attitude towards the Ottoman Caliphate. As we noticed above, 'Āzūrī advocated the Arabs' complete rupture with the Ottomans. He therefore condemned those Egyptians who, because of basing their "patriotic theories on the Muslim religion and its universal and unique Caliphate" regarded the Sultan of Constantinople as the "legitimate sovereign".<sup>1</sup> In the first issue of l'Indépendance 'Āzūrī promises to criticise in future this "sophist dogma" of the Kāmilist group. Disappointment results when his analysis turns out to be no more than either journalistic polemics against Kāmil or shrewd expression of support for anti-Kāmil parties - even to the point of approving the British Occupation of Egypt. It is interesting to note that just as Kāmil defended Ottoman suzerainty over Egypt in order to combat the British, 'Āzūrī and other Arab nationalists defended the British in order to thwart the Ottomans. In an article entitled "Chose d'Égypte - Douches Froides" prominence has been given to the formation of an Anglophile party in Egypt led by Muḥammad Wahīd Bey.<sup>2</sup> Support for other Egyptian Anglophile parties and press, such as al muqtaṭam, al waṭan and al baṣīr, has also been expressed in another article entitled: "Les Partis Politiques en Égypte;

---

<sup>1</sup>l'Indépendance, May 1907, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., May 1907, p. 28 et seq.



l'Initiative de Mohamed Wahid-Bey<sup>1</sup>, in which Kāmil has been denounced as an agent of Constantinople. Even Kāmil's death was seized upon by l'Indépendance as an occasion for his renewing attacks on the Anglophobe patriots in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

As a politician, 'Azūrī was, like Afghānī, definitely an apostle of Realpolitik. He conceived the whole system of European politics as a welter of intrigues and manoeuvres on the part of great powers in quest of grandeur and might. Since Germany was the main protector of the Ottoman Caliph, 'Azūrī's sympathies naturally lay with the British and French. By likening Britain to ancient Carthage and Germany to ancient Rome, he unscrupulously encouraged the British to interfere with the political developments in the Arabian peninsula "if they did not want the fate of Carthage to befall them".<sup>3</sup> His admiration for France was motivated, not so much by the cold calculation of power politics, as by his belief in her as the leader of contemporary civilization.<sup>4</sup> No wonder, therefore, that he was in favour of an alliance between Britain and France to hold in check the German penetration into the Arabian peninsula. In view of his keen interest in the subtleties of power politics, 'Azūrī could be no

---

<sup>1</sup>l'Indépendance, October-November, 1907, p. 121 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., April-May, 1908, p. 193 et seq.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., August-September, 1907, pp. 65-72.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., June, 1907, p. 38.

believer in the mass struggle. In his opinion, ordinary people, especially in the Eastern countries, could have neither the power nor the competence to determine their destiny. He does not express this view openly in regard to the Arabs; in fact in his first election speech addressed to his constituents in Jerusalem, after the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908, he extols their heroic struggle against oppressive governors.<sup>1</sup> It is rather from his analysis of the Persian revolution of 1908, entitled Exposé Historique du Mouvement Libéral Persan, that his belief in the impotence of the masses is laid bare. He holds the Persian people incapable of running their own affairs.<sup>2</sup> He is so much obsessed with this belief that at one point, when he uses the word "citizens" (citoyens), he hastens to define it as "l'élément bourgeois favorable au Parlement".<sup>3</sup>

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908, as was stated above, raised hopes of liberation among the Arabs. 'Azūrī, like many other Arab intellectuals, maintained for some time close co-operation with the Young Turks. This co-operation seems to have come to an end in 1907. A paragraph in the communiqué of the Comité explains the rupture in these terms:

<sup>1</sup> l'Indépendance, July-August-September, 1908, pp. 241-242.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., December 1907 - January 1908, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

"We have to address a word of sympathy to the excellent friends whom we have among the Young Turks and tell them how much we regret to have to separate our cause from theirs.

This secession has not been caused, as one is tempted to think, by [an] antagonism between our race and the Turkish nation or by an obstinate parti pris allegedly underlying our conviction that this is the sole means of improving our destiny."<sup>1</sup>

But with the 1908 Revolution there occurred another change in 'Azari's thoughts in favour of co-operation with the Young Turks. In his election speech referred to above he announces complete agreement between the Young Turks ("mes compagnons d'exil")<sup>2</sup> and himself on the reforms to be re<sup>a</sup>stified by the new Ottoman Parliament. Besides, in a long article entitled: Histoire des Deux Constitutions Turques, after discerning promising symptoms of a liberal and egalitarian policy in the new Turkish regime, he makes the significant statement that:-

"In these circumstances our attitude towards the new government of Turkey should be of such a nature as to facilitate its task of reform. We had always promised our Young Turkish friends to furl our separatist flag and to unite with them in a common cause once they succeed in overthrowing the Hamidian absolutism, because we were convinced that under a liberal regime, based on a system of decentralisation, all the constituent nationalities of the Ottoman Empire would individually achieve progress in a prodigious manner."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Independence, April 1907, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., July-August, September, 1908, p. 242.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 257.

Thus 'Azūrī dropped one of the main items of his 1904 programme of the Ligue de la Nation Arabe in which the separation of an independent Arab State from the Ottoman Empire had been contemplated.

Although in the last, triple issue of l'Indépendance 'Azūrī promises that,<sup>1</sup> in spite of the truce (trêve) in "the fight" and his departure for Jerusalem to stand as a candidate in the forthcoming elections, l'Indépendance will continue to appear under the editorship of Eugène Jung, there was no further publication of the review.<sup>2</sup>

The truce of 'Azūrī with the Turks, like that of all the other Arab nationalists, was short-lived. 'Azūrī was among the first to fall victim to the anti-Arab policy of the Young Turks. On his arrival in Jerusalem he was deterred by the Ottoman authorities from standing as a candidate in the elections on the grounds of his previous conviction, and was soon placed under surveillance. He managed to escape from Jerusalem and reach Cairo.<sup>3</sup> Henceforward, 'Azūrī devoted all his time and energy to subversive activities against the Ottomans. He created a Masonic Lodge of the Scottish rite in Cairo, the aim of which was to

---

<sup>1</sup>l'Indépendance, July-August, September, 1908, p. 257.

<sup>2</sup>Antonius, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Jung, La Revolte, I, p. 25.

1  
 "liberate the nation".<sup>1</sup> 'Azūri also took part in various arms deals, inter alia, with the Italian delegation in Cairo, on behalf of the Arab rebels.<sup>2</sup> He also started the publication of a new journal called l'Égypte, of which Jung was the Paris correspondent.<sup>3</sup> The very name of this new journal,<sup>4</sup> compared with that of 'Azūri's previous review (l'Indépendance Arabe),<sup>5</sup> reflects his desire and effort to enlist the support of the Egyptians for the cause of Arab nationalism - another phase in the Egyptian-Syrian co-operation towards Arab unity. The French indecision and passivity in the face of repeated Arab appeals for intervention on their account do not seem to have made him waver in his Francophile attitude. "We will always," he wrote to Jung on November 17, 1912, "remain loyal to France, and it will not be our fault if we fail". This "loyalty" sometimes assumes the character of desperate expression of obedience towards France, and compassion for French interests. "They [referring to the French] must help us," he says in the same letter, "and tell us what they want us to do. We will then perform what is expected of us. But if they continue to listen to the palabras of the consuls and diplomats ... then they are apt to be surprised by events and, as in 1882, they will regret not having taken even a part in the direction of the movement."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jung, La Révolte, I, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>4</sup>It is interesting to recall that Adīb Ishāq's first journal in Cairo was also called misr (Egypt). V. supra, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup>Jung, La Révolte, I, p. 48.

On June 18th, 1913, the first Arab-Syrian Congress opened in Paris. Its programme was to study;

1. The rights of the Arabs in the Ottoman Empire;
2. Necessity of safeguarding the national life of the Arab Ottoman lands;
3. The aspirations of the Arab colonies established abroad;
4. Syrian emigration and immigration;
5. Necessity of reform in the Arab Ottoman lands on the basis of decentralisation.

There seems to have been a serious rift among the Arab nationalists with regard to the programme and aims of the Congress. 'Azūrī approved the idea of the Congress, but in view of his differences with its sponsors, he made an eleventh-hour attempt to postpone its opening<sup>1</sup> so that he might be able to attend. The Congress, however, went ahead according to its schedule.

"The real organizers," he wrote to Jung,<sup>2</sup> of this Congress are Shukrī Ghanim and the Muḥṣan brothers. The others are the sheep of Panurge."

After referring to Ghanim's grovelling at the Turks' feet to obtain high positions, he goes on to say that:

"At heart, all these men want the independence of the Arabs. But knowing that this is a difficult task involving sacrifices and activities... they prefer to appease the Turks. This is the whole of the question.

The Paris Congress will be composed of fifty delegates,

---

<sup>1</sup>Jung, op.cit., p. 67.

of whom only five or six really understand what decentralization means. I am happy about this Congress because it will demonstrate to these men as well as to the whole world the futility of all attempts at understanding, or co-operating with, the Turks."<sup>1</sup>

The proceedings of the Congress confirmed 'Azūrī's hidden fears at the expense of contradicting his prophecy. The majority of the delegates expressed their desire to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. A deputation from the Congress called afterwards upon the Crown Prince of Constantinople and "assured His Highness of the loyalty and attachment of the Arab nation to the Ottoman dynasty and country".<sup>2</sup> It was apparently as a reward for this expression of loyalty that the leaders of the Congress were soon appointed to high official positions, but were among the first to be executed by the Turks with the outbreak of the War.<sup>3</sup>

'Azūrī was in the midst of preparations for the Arab Revolt when he was attacked by embolism and died in June 1916 in Cairo.

Antonius maintains that 'Azūrī's activities, because of "being conducted from a foreign capital and in a foreign language" never reached "the heart of the Arab nationalist movement".<sup>4</sup> But the fact remains that as far as the period immediately before the Arab Revolt is concerned, 'Azūrī represents all the aspirations, hopes and fears of the first pre-

<sup>1</sup>Jung, op.cit., pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., II, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>The Arab Awakening, p. 99.

tagonists of Arab unity.

Antonius' criticism of 'Azūrī reveals one of the cardinal characteristics of the Arab nationalist movement at the beginning of the Twentieth Century - the wide gulf between the contemplating elite and the militant mass. This was the result of another characteristic of the movement to which we have just referred, i.e. its main emphasis on practical rather than theoretical politics.

With the division of geographical Syria into the Lebanon and Syria proper under the French mandate, and Palestine and Transjordan under the British mandate (which also included Iraq), following the First World War, the striving for the universalistic ideal of Arab unity was relegated to the background in favour of the fight for the particularistic object of local independence. Even when these countries attained full independence it took the idea of Arab unity some time to come to the forefront of Arab politics as the unequal social and political development of each one of them under a separate mandatory power, compared with their equal stagnation under the Ottomans, had robbed the idea of much of its former relevance. But just as at the beginning of the Twentieth Century the components of Arab nationalist thought were welded into a fairly coherent system only as a reaction to the Turkish nationalism, the idea of Arab unity, following the political developments between the two world wars, also stood in need of a fresh "catalyst" to externalize it. This catalyst was provided by the Palestinian disaster of 1948 and



the general malaise in the Arab world after the Second World War. These points will be discussed in the following pages.

MODERN ARAB NATIONALISM

I Background

What 'Turanian Chauvinism' performed for the emergence of Arab nationalism after 1908, as briefly described in the previous chapter, the rise of Jewish nationalism achieved for its recrudescence immediately before and after the Second World War. Viewed in the context of the long history of Arab-Jewish symbiosis, this interrelation between Arab and Jewish revivals should not appear as a novel phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> To go back to an earlier historical instance, which is the reverse of the case just cited here, it was only after the rise of Islam, and mainly during its first, creative, five centuries, that the Jews within the Muslim world succeeded in achieving their first real unification and ascendancy. The economic progress and entrance of the Jews into the class of business and professional people; the commercial and family relations connecting Jews from many Muslim countries; the allegiance to ecumenical and regional central authorities; the travel for "the seeking of wisdom" and for pilgrimage to holy places and finally the uniformity of the laws respected by all Jews wherever they lived were the main agents, created after the rise of Islam, which worked towards that unification and ascendancy.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. A. H. Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, p. 106 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>S. D. Goitein, Jews and Arabs, p. 89 et seq. and p. 124.

A recent, and more relevant, example is the simultaneity of the Jewish and Arab movements towards national independence since the beginning of the twentieth century. It is sufficient to recall that the period of the expansion of the Zionist movement in general, i.e., the years 1917-1925,<sup>1</sup> coincided almost exactly with the most fervent Arab national stirrings. Is it not ironical that the Eleventh Zionist Congress in Vienna, which, inter alia, by conducting for the first time part of its proceedings in Hebrew,<sup>2</sup> gave such a great impetus to Jewish cultural effervescence, was held in 1913 - the same year that saw the convening of the first Arab Congress in Paris? Another interesting parallelism can be found in the fact that both the Arab and Jewish awakening was preceded by literary revivals. If Arab nationalism drew force and inspiration from the achievements of *Dustanī* and *Yāziqī*, Jewish self-respect was buttressed by the assiduous work of scholars like Zunz, Graetz and countless others.<sup>3</sup> In all these cases Arab and Jewish movements had an intensifying effect on each other.

The first serious clash between the two communities, from 1936 to 1939, was of momentous import for the Arab national movement as well as

---

<sup>1</sup>Israel Cohen, A Short History of Zionism, Frederick Muller, London, 1951, p. 83 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-63, also Paul Goodman and Arthur D. Lewis, Zionism: Problems and Views. T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1916, pp. 117-155.

<sup>3</sup>Goitein, Jews and Arabs, p. 129.

for inter-Arab relationship. The clash came about not only as the result of the growing Jewish immigration into Palestine, but also in consequence of the ever-widening cultural and economic gap between the two communities during the Mandate; since 1920, under Article 15 of the Mandate,<sup>1</sup> a dual system of separate Arab and Jewish education gradually developed in Palestine, formed on a linguistic and racial basis, providing for a separate curriculum and programme for each group.<sup>2</sup> Besides, the Jews' policy of avoda ivrit (Hebrew Labour), which committed Jewish enterprises to employ only Jewish labour, as well as their policy of tezeret ivrit (Hebrew product), under which Jewish products were sold at higher prices than their cheap Arab counterparts, accentuated the tendency to develop two parallel economies in Palestine.<sup>3</sup>

The 1936-1939 clash produced two connected results which deserve to be treated separately:

a) Firstly, there was, on the popular level, a sudden expansion of the trends working towards achieving Arab unity, of which the most telling example was the Muslim Brethren (ikhwān al muslimūn). This religious-political movement, which was founded by Hasan al Bannā' in Ismā'īlīyah

---

<sup>1</sup> Article 15 recognized: "... the right of each community to maintain its own schools for education of its own members in its own language."

<sup>2</sup> Rony E. Gabbay, A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict, Librairie E. Droz, Geneva, 1959, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

(Egypt) in 1928, and was inspired by the teachings of Afghānī and 'Abdūh,<sup>1</sup> started to create branches outside Egypt soon after the Arab rebellion against Jewish immigration. In 1937 its first branch was opened in Damascus and was to be the headquarters for the Central Committee responsible for setting up centres in the various districts of Syria and Lebanon.

"Most likely," writes Ishak Musa Husaini, "the movement there [in Syria] got its boost from Syrian students who had studied in Egypt and were members of the Brethren during the period of their studies. The Brethren gave special attention to the Arab students who were studying in Egypt; they treated them with cordiality and gave them equal status with the Egyptian members. Here the contact between the movement in Egypt and the Arab students was made."<sup>2</sup>

This contact should also be regarded as but another phase of the Egyptian-Syrian co-operation towards Arab unity to which reference was made<sup>3</sup> before. The Syrian branch was soon followed by the spread of the movement to Sudan and North Africa. The Palestine branch was set up in 1946 - that

---

<sup>1</sup> Ishak Musa Husaini, The Moslem Brethren, Khayat, Beirut, 1956, p. 25. The Brethren movement was, as stated by Husaini, "a reaction to a transitional, intellectual period, the contact of East and West, and the social upheavals which followed the wars. These factors resulted in a spiritual crisis, a struggle between the old and the new, religion and science, liberalism and tradition." (Ibid., p. 96).

Referring to "the popular movements" of the kind of the Brethren, H.A.R. Gibb also remarks that they represent "a revolt against what is felt to be in some particular relations, an intolerable state of affairs. In conformity with the atomistic and discrete character of Arab and Muslim thought, the imagination and effort are concentrated upon an immediate objective - the removal of something that can no longer be borne." (Modern Trends in Islam, p. 113.)

<sup>2</sup> The Moslem Brethren, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> supra, pp. 160-161.

is, later than the Syrian branches by about ten years. The delay was due to the fact that Palestine was suffering from "violent political disturbances which distracted thinking from religious matters".<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the Brethren took an active part in the Arab rebellion of 1936-1939.<sup>2</sup>

Since two of the principal aims of the Brethren were the realization of Arab unity and "throwing off the yoke" of those European countries which "have aggressed or are aggressing against the Islamic homeland",<sup>3</sup> it is only natural that their growing strength should have acted as a contributory factor towards the growth of Arab nationalist feeling. It was in consequence of this growth that, in September 1943, fifteen of the most active of Arab, anti-Western groups decided to join forces in a new organization called ittihād shabāb al ahzāb wa'l hai'at (the Union of the Youth of the Political Parties) in order to step up "resistance to the British, to boycott them, and to prevent any Egyptian from negotiating with them". This organization comprised, in addition to the Brethren, the Nationalist Party (hizb al watanī), the Egyptian Front, the Propaganda Front for the Nile Valley, the Committee of Liberation, the Nationalist Committee of the Azhar, the Arab Club, the Sudanese Stud-

---

<sup>1</sup>The Moslem Brethren, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

ents' Union and others.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the Brethren, other movements, albeit of less significance, were launched in Syria following the Revolt in Palestine. In 1937 a Muslim youth organization called the najjādah was formed in Lebanon which "believed in Pan-Arabism, disowned localism and tribalism, and accepted as its programme to work for some form of Union of Arab countries, provided that autonomy in internal affairs was preserved".<sup>2</sup> On the whole the Revolt aroused great enthusiasm in Syria and helped to drive the nationalist movement along the path of extremisms and violence, both because of the close links between Syria and Palestine and because of the presence in Syria and Lebanon of a large number of Arab nationalist refugees who had found it impossible to remain in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> But of special importance was the first Pan-Arab Conference which was held in September, 1937, in Buldān (Syria), attended by five hundred private representatives; the Conference passed a resolution declaring that "the Arab nation and the Muslim people would continue the struggle for the Arab cause in Palestine, to achieve the liberation of the country and the establishment of an Arab government".<sup>4</sup> It was after the Buldān Conference that protests against the Jewish immigration, and demon-

---

<sup>1</sup>W. Heyworth Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, Washington, 1950, pp. 46-47.

<sup>2</sup>N. A. Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1957, p. 195

<sup>3</sup>Hourani, op.cit., p. 222.

<sup>4</sup>Gabbay, op.cit., p. 36.

strations of solidarity, were organized in some Arab countries for the first time.<sup>1</sup> In October, 1938 another conference took place in Cairo. It was called "The World Inter-Parliamentary Congress of Arab and Muslim Countries for the defence of Palestine". In spite of all their differences, the delegates were "united in their opposition to the Mandate and demand for Palestinian independence".<sup>2</sup>

b) Secondly, in addition to Arab popular reaction, there was also an Arab official reaction to the Revolt of 1936 which was manifested by inter-governmental conferences, exchange of notes, diplomatic protests and so on. It was this second kind of reaction which led to the recognition, on the part at least of one Great Power, of Arab solidarity in regard to the Palestine problem. The first official Arab intervention came in 1939 when Britain invited the Arab government to attend the London Conference to discuss the situation in Palestine. The Conference, which took place during February-March 1939, further awakened the Arab states to the necessity of unity in the face of Jewish challenge, although politically it failed to reach any solution to the Arab-Jewish differences.<sup>3</sup>

It was as a result of the combined force of those popular and official demonstrations of solidarity, coupled with a considerable measure

---

<sup>1</sup>Gabbay, op.cit., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 37.



of British encouragement,<sup>1</sup> that the League of Arab States came into being in 1945. The League, in addition to embodying the common feelings and demands of the Arabs with regard to one of the most urgent problems occasioning its creation, i.e. the Palestinian impasse, also served to "sharpen the awareness of Arab officialdom (to) the interdependence of the Arab states and (to) the imperative need for greater Arab cohesion".<sup>2</sup>

---

However, the above brief account of Arab-Jewish relations would have been irrelevant to our research had it not been for the fact that the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 is regarded by the Arabs, not only as a Jewish encroachment on their homeland, but also as a symbol of Western predatory policy against themselves. This association in the Arab mind between Israel and the West is due not only to American, French and British contributions to the creation and/or consolidation of the State of Israel, but also to "the prolonged connection of ninety per cent of the Jewish people with Europe and Western civilization"<sup>3</sup> as well as to the European character of the Israeli State.

---

<sup>1</sup>Arab Unity, pp. 117-119. Hourani, op.cit., p. 269.

<sup>2</sup>Arab Unity, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup>Goitein, Jews and Arabs, p. 9.

"The European character," says S. D. Goitein, Chairman of the School of Oriental Studies, Hebrew University (Jerusalem), "of the new (Israeli) State is even more pronounced, if we take into account its political and spiritual leadership. As far as I know, of the Ministers of State only one is of non-European extraction, and of the members of the Supreme Court of Justice or of the full professors at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem not a single one. In other walks of life, the situation is not very much different, if, for example, one examines the leading writers of the older generation, the doctors or the engineers."<sup>1</sup>

The State of Israel is therefore the "spearhead of the West in the midst of a hostile Eastern world".<sup>2</sup> Opposition to the West cannot, then, in Arab nationalist thought be separated from abhorrence of Israel.

---

No account of modern Arab nationalism can be complete without taking into account the material and spiritual malaise of the Arab countries immediately after the Second World War. The onset of this malaise was due to a host of interrelated economic and sociopolitical causes, nearly all bound up with the Arab-West relationship. The unequal distribution of wealth was exacerbated by the consequences of the War, with the rich becoming richer and the poor, poorer. The rich benefited by the war-time shortage of imports, the increase in demand arising from the presence of Allied troops and the consequent rise in prices.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Goitein, op.cit., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Issawi, Egypt: An Economic and Social Analysis, p. 91.

The poor, on the other hand, did not enjoy such 'fruits of the war'. The post-war decline of world cotton prices, to mention one example, had a ruinous effect on the Egyptian fallāhīn and thereby on the Egyptian economy. But the cotton decline was more than an economic setback; it had far-reaching political implications. It undermined rural support for the regime of King Fārūq, thus preparing the ground for the 1952 military coup.<sup>1</sup> The astonishing increase of the Egyptian population, to mention another example, created a more serious problem. In 1947 Egypt had a population of over 20 million (compared with about 16 million in 1937<sup>2</sup>) living on 6 million acres of land - "a population density of 1,198 persons per square mile of habitable land as compared with 27 in Turkey and 44 in the United States".<sup>3</sup> This simple statistics accounts for the accentuated poverty of the Egyptian masses and the magnitude of the task before the Egyptian "reformers".

The same pattern was discernible in Syria, where there was a considerable increase in the wealth of the landlord-merchants under the French mandate,<sup>4</sup> but "neither time nor the economic structure made it possible for whatever wealth that came to the country to percolate down

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society, The Free Press, Glencoe (Illinois), 1958, pp. 227-228.

<sup>2</sup> Issawi, op.cit., p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Lerner, op.cit., p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

to the workman and the peasant".<sup>1</sup> The population problem, although less acute than that in Egypt, was and still is great enough to confront the agricultural potentialities of the country with the danger of exhaustion.<sup>2</sup>

No less important was the age-old problem of the complexity of the world of thought which now embraced nearly all Arab countries and was intensified by the introduction of all manner of intellectual influences. The major trends of Westernization, Islamic revivalism and local patriotism - as discussed in the previous chapters - proved, with growing clarity, to be ineffective in the face of the still more intractable new problems, now only served to add to this general complexity. The idea of Arab unity, under these circumstances, presented a relief from all the prevalent conflicts, inconsistencies and anarchical situations.

One positive result of post-war economic development in the Arab countries, which has been instrumental in promoting the rise of modern Arab nationalism, was the growth of the urban population and of the bourgeoisie in general.<sup>3</sup>

"Almost invariably," says Carlton J. H. Hayes, "it was from the ranks of the bourgeoisie that the pro-

<sup>1</sup>Ziadeh, op.cit., pp. 142-143; Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, pp. 174-175.

<sup>2</sup>Ziadeh, op.cit., p. 241.

<sup>3</sup>Jacques Berque, Les Arabes d'Hier à Demain, p. 69 et seq.

essional nationalists were drawn.... They patronized societies for the preservation or revival of the national language. They founded museums for the collection of national relics."<sup>1</sup>

These words, which were written in describing the emergence of European nationalism, equally hold good of modern Arab nationalism which, contrary to its earlier phase, today enjoys a solid social basis.

Finally one needs to take account of a persisting factor in the Arab political life which was instrumental in fanning the flame of nationalist feelings. This was an exasperating sense of humiliation. The Arabs suffered humiliation at the hands of both the West and the Jews, and this further identified Western imperialism with Jewish menace in the Arab mind. The Western humiliation of the Arab world was symbolized by such events as the crushing of the revolt of Rashīd 'Alī Gīlānī in Iraq (May 1942), and the French bombardment of Damascus (May 1945) and last, but not least, by the Palestine nakbah (disaster). All these events were also seen as part of the general Western drive to subjugate the Arab people. No wonder that the leaders of the Egyptian army's coup d'etat of July 22, 1952 have all given such a prominent place to the determination to erase the stigma of the Palestine defeat in enumerating the motives for their action.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Nationalism and Internationalism, edited by Edward Mead Earle, Columbia University Press, New York, 1950, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Mohammed Neguib, Egypt's Destiny, p. 29. Anwar el Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, Allan Wingate, London, 1957, p. 92. V. infra. P. 270.

Having familiarized ourselves with the background, we can now proceed to an analysis of the basic ideas of modern Arab nationalism.

---

Two points related to Arab political terminology can be briefly disposed of before starting our discussion.

1. The word umma in the works of modern Arab nationalists has lost all its religious connotation and has, therefore, become the exact Arab equivalent of nation.<sup>1</sup> One of the first Arab writers to use umma in this sense was perhaps Adīb Ishāq, who applies the term to any group of people enjoying ethnical (jinsi) community.<sup>2</sup>
2. The common Arab term for nationalism is qawmiyah, which is now rarely confused with wataniyah (patriotism); whereas the former is used mainly in describing the general Arab movement for unity, the latter is employed in respect of separate patriotic movements in each of the Arab countries. One can therefore speak of Arab qawmiyah, but never of Arab wataniyah. Qawmiyah is a derivative of qawm, which is another Arabic word for nation but, contrary to umma, has no religious connotation and seems to be applied to groups of people with mainly racial affiliations.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, inter alia, Mustafā Shihābī, "al qawmiyah wa 'awāmiluha" in maima' al 'ilmi, Damascus, July 1953, 33;3, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> ad durar, pp. 100-102, 168-171, 200 et seq. V. supra, p. 161.

It is significant that qawm has been referred almost all over the Koran to such atheist and/or ill-fated peoples as 'Ād, Thamūd, and the "peoples" of Abraham and Noah,<sup>1</sup> a point which should make the term qawmīyah highly objectionable in the purists' eyes. It is also noteworthy that another derivative of qawm, i.e. aqawmīyah, is used in the sense of "internationalism" as opposed to nationalism.<sup>2</sup> In view of all this, it would perhaps have been better to coin another word for nationalism. Some people have suggested ummīyah, but this has been rejected on the ground that it might be understood as a derivative of ummī, i.e. illiterate, hence meaning illiteracy.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "Moreover, if they charge you with imposture, then already before them, the Qawm of Noah, and Ad and Thamoud, and the Qawm of Abraham, and the Qawm of Lot, and the dwellers in Madian, have charged their prophets with imposture. Moses, too was charged with imposture. And I bore long with the unbelievers; then seize on them; and how great was the change that I wrought." (XII, 43)  
 "And as to the people (Qawm) of Noah. When they treated their Apostles as impostors, we drowned them; and we made them a sign to mankind; a wicked chastisement have we prepared for the wicked." (XIV, 39)  
 "And it was he who destroyed... The Qawm of Thamoud and left not one survivor. And before them the Qawm of Noah who were most wicked and most perverse." (LIII, 52 and 53). In some places Qawm has been referred to the Arabs themselves, but when there is talk of their misdeeds or disadvantages: "But thy (Muhammad's) Qawm have accused the Koran of falsehood..." (VI, 66) "This is one of the secret Histories we reveal it unto thee: neither thee nor thy people knew it ere this..." (XI, 51)

<sup>2</sup> Muṣṭafā Shihābī, op.cit., p. 370 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 373.

## II A Critique of the Works of Modern Exponents of Arab Nationalism.

The modern exponents of Arab nationalism can be divided into various schools from various social, political and philosophical points of view. However, the basis of our division here will be the significance which they attach to each of the factors working towards Arab unity. On this general basis we can discern three main schools among modern Arab writers:

First, there is the school which adopts a monistic approach to the question by emphasizing only one factor of Arab unity in such a way as either to completely obliterate the other factors or to relegate them to the background.

The second school is based, contrary to the first, on a pluralistic outlook, and attaches equal value to all the factors of unity.

The third and last school is characterized by its concern for the circumstances <sup>in</sup> ~~under~~ which such factors should operate, and holds the factors themselves to be merely of secondary importance.

### The Monistic School

Of all the factors of Arab unity, the Arabic language has received the greatest attention of modern Arab nationalists. This has been partly due to the circumstances surrounding the emergence of Arab nationalism, and partly due to the impact of the West. As we saw in Chapter Three, the rise of Arab nationalism in the early part of the



twentieth century was preceded by Arab literary revival as led by Bustanī, Yazījī and others. Later on, under the influence of Western, and particularly German, nationalists, the Arabs started to rationalize the part played by language in their nationalist revival. It will be recalled that the German apologists of nationalism, in their endeavour to secure the unity of all German-speaking peoples, regarded language as "the most important criterion by which a nation is recognized to exist, and to have the right to form a state on its own".<sup>1</sup> This idea received a systematic exposition through the works of such great German thinkers as Herder and Fichte. In Herder's philosophy of nationalism, language is the main instrument of every nationality, "not an artificial instrument, but a gift of God, the guardian of the national community and the matrix of its civilization".<sup>2</sup> In his Addresses to the German Nation, Fichte goes so far as to say, "We give the name of people to men whose organs of speech are influenced by the same external conditions, who live together, and who develop their language in continuous communication with each other".<sup>3</sup>

An adaptation of the ideas of Herder and Fichte to the particular conditions of the Arab world has been attempted by Abūḥaldūn Saḥī' al

<sup>1</sup>Elie Kedourie, Nationalism, Hutchinson of London, 1960, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1944, p. 431.

<sup>3</sup>Kedourie, op.cit., p. 64.

Ḥuṣrī, the doyen of modern Arab nationalists. An interesting feature of Ḥuṣrī's life is his extensive association with most of the Arab countries; this has lent a markedly "Arabist" character to his works. Ḥuṣrī is Syrian by origin, Yemeni by birth. His father, As Sayid Muḥammad Hilāl al Ḥuṣrī, was an 'alim (learned scholar) who studied in the Azhar and obtained his ijāzah (licence). Upon his return to Aleppo, Muḥammad embarked upon a judicial career which eventually led to his appointment as President of the Court of Appeal in the Yemen. It was in Ṣan'ā', the capital of Yemen, that Ḥuṣrī was born. Ḥuṣrī accompanied his father on many of his travels to Athens, Ankara, Tripoli (North Africa, now part of Libya), back to Yemen and again to Tripoli, where his father was appointed President of the Court of Appeal. Ḥuṣrī finally parted with his father and settled down in Constantinople where he completed his secondary school studies. After graduation, he started his varied career: First he worked as a teacher of natural science at Ioánnina (Greece) for five years; then he was appointed to various high administrative positions in the Ottoman administration in Khasikovo (Bulgaria) and Flórina in the Greek province of Monástra. Monástris was then an active centre of the Young Turk agitation against 'Abdul Ḥamīd, and Ḥuṣrī was among those Arabs who co-operated with that movement in the hope of its subsequent contribution to Arab emancipation.

After the 1908 Revolution Ḥuṣrī went back to his teaching career, this time in Constantinople; for some time he taught the principles of education and ethnology; after the deposition of 'Abdul Ḥamīd he was

made Director of the Teachers' Training College. At the beginning of the First World War he founded two schools, one for children and another for training women teachers for children. These activities coincided with the intensification of the anti-Arab policy of the Young Turk rulers.

After the First World War, and with the expulsion of the Turks from the Arab countries, Ḥuṣrī left Constantinople for Syria and was soon appointed Minister of Education under Faiṣal's short-lived rule. Being "a personal friend and advisor of Faiṣal" he was appointed by the latter as his special envoy to conduct negotiations with General Gouraud, French Commander-in-Chief and High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon, after the ultimatum of July 1920.<sup>1</sup> When Faiṣal was expelled from Syria by the French Ḥuṣrī accompanied him to Europe. Upon Faiṣal's accession to the Iraqi throne Ḥuṣrī became engaged in intensive educational activities in Iraq. He was successively made Dean of the Faculty of Law and Director of the Department of Antiquities; he maintained the latter position for twenty years. After that he went to Syria where, as the Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Education, he brought about far-reaching changes in the educational programme of the country. From Syria he went to Egypt, where he was made lecturer at the Institute of Higher Education for Teachers. His next position was Advisor to the Cultural Department of the Arab League up to the year 1951. Then he founded the Institute of Higher

---

<sup>1</sup>Zeine N. Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, Khayat's, Beirut, 1960, pp. 176-178.

Arabic Studies and, after a short period as its director, resigned all his positions to devote his time entirely to teaching. Ḥuṣrī's scientific interest was first confined to the natural sciences; his studies in this field eventually aroused his interest in psychology, and, this in its turn brought him into contact with the art of education and, finally, with the social sciences and historical critique.

Ḥuṣrī also tried his hand at journalism for a short period. In Constantinople he founded a review called anwār al 'ulūm (Lights of the Sciences). Two other reviews, one called at tadrīsāt' al ibtidā'iyah (The Primary Instructions) and at tarbiyah (Education), appeared during his holding educational posts. He visited Europe many times, staying in Switzerland, France, England, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Rumania, Italy and Holland either to study modern methods of education, or, to attend various international conferences. He went to Spain in 1926 to visit the historical monuments of Andalusia; from there he went to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and finally Sicily (in 1939).<sup>1</sup>

As can be understood from this short account, Ḥuṣrī's active life has been mainly dedicated to education, rather than to participation in the various political movements connected with the Arab awakening or Arab unity. He must, therefore, be regarded as belonging to that breed of Arab revivalists which is represented by Ṭaḥṭawī, rather than by 'Azūri,

---

<sup>1</sup>Sāmī al Kaiyālī, al adab al-'arabī al mu'āṣir fī sūriyah, dār al ma'ārif bi miṣr, Cairo, 1959, p. 122 et seq.

Ḥuṣrī's experience under the Turanian, anti-Arab chauvinism of the Turks made him aware of the vital part which the Arabic language can play in Arab revival; but this awareness, as will be presently seen, became later an obsession with him which has coloured his entire political outlook on Arab unity.

The fact that the latter part of Ḥuṣrī's educational career has been almost equally divided between Egypt and the Fertile Crescent should be regarded, especially in view of his systematic exposition of the idea of Arab unity, as one of those rare, conscious links between the Egyptian and Syrian Arab nationalists.

---

Ḥuṣrī has written many books and pamphlets in defence of Arabism and the unity of all Arab-speaking countries. In one of his more straightforward apologetics entitled āra' wa aḥādīth fi'l qawmīyat'al 'arbiyah (Opinions and Traditions about Arab Nationalism) he propounds his conception of the term umma and the Arab umma. In his discussion of the contemporary divergencies between the Western thinkers on the meaning of the nation, he simplifies the matter by dividing those thinkers into the French school, represented in his book by Ernest Renan's Qu'est Ce Qu'Une Nation, and the German, of which no specific representative has been mentioned. The French school, says Ḥuṣrī, bases the concept of nation on the principle of "will and desire", the meaning apparently being that anyone who merely wishes to be included in a nation is thereby a member

of that nation. But the German school, which enjoys the full sympathy and approval of the writer, considers language as the basis of nationality: all people speaking in the same language belong to the same nation. The writer accepts the German concept of nation which, as he says, maintains that "the basis of nationalism, qawmīyah<sup>1</sup> and its right standard, is language". Starting from this assumption, he comes to the conclusion that: "Every nation which speaks Arabic is Arab".<sup>2</sup>

Ḥuṣrī does not put forward any concrete arguments in support of the standard of language for the assessment of the concept of nation. Instead, he tries to refute the views of the French school by ascribing them to narrow-minded expansionist schemes.

"The French had for many centuries," he writes, "achieved their political unity and dominated territories whose inhabitants did not speak French. Besides, they had for a long time aspired to expand their territory to the north in order to gain access to natural borders.... therefore, acceptance of the German theory would have resulted in the miscarriage of their deep-rooted aspirations. Moreover, this would have exposed some French provinces to the danger of secession. It was thus in the interests of the French strongly to oppose this (German) theory."<sup>3</sup>

The theory which the French propounded to counter the German school, continues Ḥuṣrī, was that of "the will and desire" (al irādah wa'l mashīyah). But the writer does not express any real argument in support of the German theory which coincides with his own, except the sweeping

---

<sup>1</sup> Ḥuṣrī makes his discussion considerably complicated by sometimes using the term qawmīyah, as he himself, says, as the equivalent for the German Volkstum, and sometimes in the sense of nationalism. Here, I presume, he means rather the Volkstum.

<sup>2</sup> Ṣatī' al Ḥuṣrī, arā'wa aḥādīth fi'l qawmīyat' al 'arabīyah, dar al 'ilm līl mala'In, Beirut, 1959, (third ed.), p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

statement that: "All the political events which have taken place since that time (?) have come to confirm the German theory and discredit the French school."<sup>1</sup> A few lines further down the writer makes clear what he means by these "political events": "the historical events, from the time of the unification of Germany down to the creation of Yugoslavia, have proved that the life of a nation is primarily based on language".<sup>2</sup> We must note here that the example of Yugoslavia cannot possibly corroborate the writer's thesis as that country, with her Serb, Croat and Slovene components, together with her sizeable Macedonian, Hungarian, German and other minorities, is anything but a state based on a unique, common language.

At the end of the chapter in which the foregoing discussion takes place, the writer, in summing up his views, suddenly raises the important point of historical ties between the members of a nation. Contesting the French view about the importance of the "willingness to live together" in the creation of nation, he says that this willingness is only the result of the nation's existence and of the idea of nationalism.

"The individuals," he goes on to say, "speaking in the same language, and sharing the same historical process (ya'malūna fī tiyāri tarikhi wahid) understand one another and cherish mutual affection more than they do with other peoples. Therefore, they tend to live to-

---

<sup>1</sup>Husri, op.cit., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

gether or separate (themselves from others), and it is in this form that the habit of living in common grows - a habit which is the natural outcome of community in language and history."<sup>1</sup>

Huṣrī does not, of course, attach to history the same importance which he attaches to language because whereas he regards language as the life-blood of the nation, he holds history merely as the source of its consciousness.

"The nation," he says, "is a historical being, consisting of life and consciousness (shu'ur). The life of the nation is (or depends on) language and its consciousness is (or depends on) its history. The nation which forgets its history, but still retains its language, is like a social element which has lost its consciousness and awareness, but still continues to live. The nation recovers its consciousness when it recollects and learns its history. But, if the nation loses its language and adopts another language, it becomes integrated in the nation (speaking in that language) and, therefore, loses its particular existence...."<sup>2</sup>

One should simply compare the above sentences with the following paragraph summarized from Addresses to the German Nation in order to appreciate Fichte's influence on Huṣrī:<sup>3</sup>

The French, says Fichte, were originally Teutons who forsook German speech for a neo-Latin idiom. With the neo-Latin language came all the faults of the Romans, and the French now suffer "from the idea

<sup>1</sup> Huṣrī, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sylvia Haim, Islam and the Theory of Arab Nationalism, p. 37.



of lack of seriousness about social relations, the idea of self-abandonment, and the idea of heartless laxity". Had they retained their original speech they would have never allowed such degradation to befall them, for they would have still possessed a living language, and would have been able, by means of it, to guard against the notions introduced and made popular by the use of Latin.<sup>1</sup>

Ḥuṣrī further propounds his language-centered theory of nation in another book entitled al 'urūbah bain dū'ātiḥā wa mu'aridīḥā (Arabism between its Friends and Enemies). A large section of the book is devoted to criticizing the views of Anton Sa'ādah, the leader of the Syrian Nationalist Party.<sup>2</sup> Ḥuṣrī rejects Sa'ādah's belief in common territory as the determining attribute of nationality<sup>3</sup> and assigns this role to language.<sup>4</sup>

Ḥuṣrī's conception of Arabism is definitely laic. This becomes evident from his adherence to the interpretation made by the First Arab

<sup>1</sup> Kedourie, op.cit., p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Sa'ādah's Party "professed or rather formulated the specific Syrian as distinct from Arab nationalism". At first a secret society in Syria, it was discovered by the authorities in 1935 and its leading members imprisoned. From that time it grew in size and importance. The Party reached its zenith a year or two before the beginning of the Second World War (Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, p. 197). The Party was suppressed in 1949 and Sa'ādah himself was executed in the same year. In addition to emphasizing the historic reality of a Syrian nation, the Party is also characterized by its markedly laic outlook as well as its dogmatic attitude on the question of national loyalty (Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, pp. 103, 105, 108, 109, 112, 197.)

<sup>3</sup> al 'urūbah bain dū'ātiḥā wa mu'aridīḥā, dār al 'ilm li'l malā'īn, Beirut, 1957, third edition, p. 79 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

Cultural Conference (Lebanon, 1947) of the term:

"Arabism has not been, and is not, confined to a particular group or to a particular religion.... The solidarity between the Arab nationals ... does not differentiate between the Arabs on the basis of their religions."<sup>1</sup>

In difā' 'an al 'urūbah (Defense of Arabism), Ḥuṣrī sets himself the task of replying to all the objections which have been levelled against Arabism. An uneasy feeling results when the reader realizes that the book does not inform him of these objections in full, but rather summarizes them in Ḥuṣrī's own words. Let us cite an example:

In a chapter entitled "Linguistic Unity and National Unity" Ḥuṣrī discusses the situation of multilingual countries "such as the United States (sic.), Belgium and Switzerland" in order to answer those opponents who deny the value of language as a basis of national unity:

"The United States of America, runs the argument of the opponents, seceded from Britain although it had an English-speaking population; the Latin American countries seceded from Spain and Portugal, although their languages did not differ from one another. And then there is Belgium whose inhabitants speak in three different languages.' I have read and heard this kind of objection since a quarter of a century ago, and have repudiated them several times on the basis of historical facts."<sup>2</sup>

In reply to this objection Ḥuṣrī has two things to say:

<sup>1</sup> Ḥuṣrī, al 'urūbah bain dū'ātiha wa mu'aridīhā, pp. 124-125.

<sup>2</sup> difā' 'an al 'urūbah, dār 'ilm l'il malā'in, Beirut, 1957, second edition, pp. 146-147.

(a) As a considerable number of the peoples of the United States are immigrants who went to that country only during the first two decades of the present century, "we should not call the United States an English-speaking" country.<sup>1</sup> Besides, it took a very long time for English to become the common language of the country.<sup>2</sup>

(b) The United States and Britain are separated from each other by the expanse of the Atlantic Ocean:

"Undoubtedly, the geographic situation also played an important role in the creation of the new (United States) government at the end of this (American) revolution."<sup>3</sup>

"There is no doubt that the situation of the Arab countries greatly differs from that of the United States .... The Arab countries have had a common language for many centuries ... their territories connected with one another, a complete geographical connection, without there being the expansive Atlantic Ocean which separates America from Europe."<sup>4</sup>

If these arguments may not silence the opponents of Arabism, they serve instead to reveal some contradictions in Ḥuṣrī's thoughts: The mere fact that he points out the geographical separation between the United States and Britain as a justification for their political separation indicates his implicit admission of at least another important factor in the formation of nation, that of territorial unity.

<sup>1</sup>difa' an al 'urūbah, p.162.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 164.

Ḥuṣrī makes further concessions over his monistic theory of nation, as set out in ārā' wa ahādīth, when he tries, again in reply to opponents of Arabism, to explain why the Latin American countries have not aspired to unity with Spain and Portugal in spite of their common language. Here he mentions the ethnical diversity of the Latin American peoples together with their linguistic differences, both between themselves and with Spain and Portugal, as the causes of the separation,<sup>1</sup> thus conceding the partial significance of the ethnical factor. Ḥuṣrī's discussion of the examples of Belgium and Switzerland is yet further admission of the complexity of the concept of nation and the impossibility of ascribing it to one single force: Belgium, he says, was created, and holds together, because of the machinations of foreign interests and the intense promiscuity of her two major communities.<sup>2</sup> Switzerland also owes its unity and existence to a "long series of internal and external - geographic, historical, political and social - factors and circumstances",<sup>3</sup> which the writer readily analyses in five pages.<sup>4</sup>

The reader, then, in the latter part of the book, watches a pitiful, gradual collapse of Ḥuṣrī's monistic theory. But to stave off criti-

<sup>1</sup>difa' an al 'urūbah, p. 166 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 174 et seq.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 182-187.

cism against this self-inconsistency he seizes upon a weird logic at the very beginning of his discussion of "Linguistic Unity and National Unity":

"...We should study," he writes, "these examples (of the United States, Latin America and the rest) and probe into the causes which underlie them, to see whether (these examples) present a real contradiction with the principle of the rise of governments on the basis of nationalities (qawmīyat)— and with the theory of the role of language in the creation of nations — or whether their contradiction is merely superficial, similar to that of some natural happenings with the law of gravity."<sup>1</sup>

The writer then mentions the instances of climbing smoke and flying birds which might be taken by some uninstructed people as evidence against the law of gravity but, in fact, are caused by other intervening natural factors which counter the gravity of the earth.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the contradiction of the examples of the United States, Latin America, etc. with Ḥuṣrī's theory of nation is only superficial, due to complicated internal and external causes operating in these countries.<sup>3</sup>

Ḥuṣrī's argument on this point contains a major flaw. Basically, it is not logical to demonstrate the correctness of a theory by likening the existing evidence against it to the exceptions of natural laws. By this chop-logic it is possible to corroborate every figment of human im-

<sup>1</sup>difa' an al 'urubah, pp. 148-149.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

agination dubbed as theory. Besides, contrary to what Ḥuṣrī suggests, it does not seem that nations with single, national languages (a) owe their creation to these national languages, (b) outnumber the multilingual nations to such an extent as to make the latter group seem an exception to Ḥuṣrī's theory. As regards national languages, it must be said that in most cases they achieved importance as such only after the emergence of their respective nations. English became the national language of the British Isles when the English, Welsh and Scottish inhabitants of these islands achieved unity among themselves; it was not the English language that created the British nation. The same holds true of French, which became a national language after the unification of various ethnical groups inhabiting Gaul. It seems fairer to say that language does not create nation, but rather assists in securing its survival by contributing to the building of a national spirit.<sup>1</sup>

On the question of the numerical superiority of nations with single languages to those speaking in various languages, so far as the present state of affairs in the world goes the latter group seems to outweigh the former. In fact, there are few nations in the world with single languages; Ḥuṣrī himself mentions only the examples of the Arabs, Italians and Germans.<sup>2</sup> It is indeed this group of nations that form

---

<sup>1</sup>See also Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, pp. 7 et seq. and 14.

<sup>2</sup>difa' an al 'urubah, p. 148.

the minority in the world. There are, of course, national languages in many countries; but these are languages, originally alien to many individuals of the nation, adopted either for the sake of political expediency or for administrative convenience. They are not, as H<sub>u</sub>s<sub>r</sub>ī would like to believe, languages spoken by all members of a given nation from time immemorial. India is a case in point. According to the Indian Constitution (Article 324), Hindi is the official, national language of the country, but actually there are some two hundred and twenty two languages in India, of which fourteen have been recognized by the Constitution. When Hindi legally becomes the national language of India in 1965 and takes the place of English<sup>1</sup> (although grave doubts have been already expressed by learned Indians on this matter), it will not be a national language in the sense that H<sub>u</sub>s<sub>r</sub>ī has in mind and believes to be the basis of a nation's existence.

As it has been observed earlier the Germans, Italians, Arabs and some others enjoy an exceptional position from the viewpoint of linguistic unity; namely, in the case of the first two (not to speak of the Swiss and Austrian cases), the political and linguistic boundaries almost coincide with each other and the same holds true for all Arab countries and will hold true for the greater Arab country yearned for

---

<sup>1</sup>"Hindi" in the devanagari script is the official language of the Union... the English language, however, will continue to be the official language for a period of not more than fifteen years from the commencement of the Constitution."

"The following languages are recognized by the Constitution: (1) Assamē, (a) Bengali, (3) Gujrati, (4) Hindi, (5) Kannada, (6) Kashmir, (7) Malayalam, (8) Marathi, (9) Oriya, (10) Punjabi, (11) Sanskrit, (12) Tamil, (13) Telugu, (14) Urdu." (The Times of India Year Book, London 1959-60, p.46.)

by the Arab nationalists. This linguistic unity is undoubtedly a valuable asset and an enormous contributory force in the bringing about of the unity of all Arabs. But this should not lure anybody into theorising about the decisive role of language in the creation of nations.

---

The Arabic language,<sup>1</sup> being one of the major unifying forces of the Arabs in their present struggle, is bound to figure prominently in any theoretical discussion by modern Arab nationalists. But this unifying function seems often to be neutralized by one of the unfortunate characteristics of the Arabic language, which is not thoroughly discussed by Ḥuṣrī, that is the difference between spoken and written Arabic, a difference greater than that prevailing in European languages. This has been caused, on the one hand, by the constant changing of spoken Arabic

---

<sup>1</sup>Arabic, strictly speaking, is the language of three groups of people inhabiting Arabia; the first group is "arab" 'ariba, the original Arabs of pure stock; they numbered nine tribes which are regarded as the descendants of Aram b. Sam b. Nuh and the first settlers in Arabia: 'Ad, Thamūd, Umayyim, 'Abīl, Ṭasm, Jadīs, Imliq, Jurhum and Wabar. These are extinct except for a few remnants incorporated in other tribes. The second group comprises the muta 'ariba (the arabicized) who are not pure-blooded Arabs; they are regarded as descendants of Kahtan and live in southern Arabia. The third group is called musta 'riba; this name is also applied to tribes who were not originally Arabs; they trace their descent from Ma 'add b. 'Adnān, a descendant of Ismā'īl, who is said to have lived with the 'arab 'ariba and to have learned their language. (Gibb & Kramer, Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, London 1953, p. 418)



over time and space and, on the other, by the fixity of the written language owing to the grip of the classics and, still more, to the fact that Arabic is the language of the Koran. The difference, in addition to rising a major obstacle in the way of the spiritual unity of the Arabs, has also given rise to considerable difficulties in the education of children, for whom classical Arabic is virtually a new language.<sup>1</sup>

A number of suggestions has been put forward to solve the linguistic problem. While the Egyptian writer Tawfīq al Ḥakīm proposes the adoption of a 'third language' (luḡah thālithah) combining the best features of both spoken and written Arabic,<sup>2</sup> the Jewish scholar S. D. Goitein suggests the <sup>use of</sup> Judaeo-Arabic dialects of Morocco, Tunis and Yemen which already possess this mixed character.<sup>3</sup>

Another difficulty which further disrupts the linguistic unity of the Arabs is the great variety of Arabic dialects. The extent of this variety can perhaps be gauged from the simple fact that the difference between the dialects of Mossul and Amārah, both in Iraq, is greater than that between the dialects of Palestine and Syria. There are, however, some modern Arab writers who do not consider these differences -

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Charles Issawi, op.cit., p. 191; The Passing of Traditional Society, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup>Jacques Berque, Les Arabes d'Hier à Demain, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup>Jews and Arabs, p. 133 et seq.

whether between dialects or between written and spoken Arabic - to be of such importance as to offset the unity of the Arab people. The arguments in favour of this viewpoint have been stated by Nabih Amīn Fāris, Head of the Department of History at the American University of Beirut, and Muḥammad Tawfīq Ḥusain, Professor of Islamic Philosophy at the same University. They can be summarized as follows:

Constant reading of the Koran throughout the ages has maintained the link between the literary language (luḡhat' al fuṣṣḥā) and the illiterate masses. The gap between spoken and written Arabic has been considerably narrowed down thanks to such efforts as the translation of the Old and New Testaments into a language at once understandable by the masses and pleasing to the learned. Finally, dialectical diversity is not confined to the Arab world and can be considered in almost any country in the world.<sup>1</sup>

The factor coming next to language in the formation of Arab nationality is religion, or to be more precise, Islam. We will discuss the attitude of Arab-Muslim religious circles in regard to Arab nationalism in a subsequent chapter; here we concern ourselves with the attitude of Arab nationalists towards Islam.

The predominant position of Islam in Arab nationalist thought is

---

<sup>1</sup>hāza'l-'ālam al 'arabī, dār al 'ilm li'l malā'in, Beirut, 1953, pp. 39-41.

primarily accounted for by the simple fact that the majority of the Arabs are Muslims. But adherence to this quantitative consideration confronts the Arab nationalists with the same contradiction as had been faced by Muṣṭafā Kāmil: an umma exclusively based on Islamic bonds between its members would keep the Arab Christians/<sup>away</sup> from participating in national life, and this would seriously undermine national solidarity which is an all important prerequisite for achieving Arab unity. Therefore a more profound argument is needed - one that is qualitatively embracing rather than quantitatively overwhelming - to justify the place of Islam in Arab nationalism. Fortunately for the religious-minded nationalists such an argument is provided by one of the main weaknesses of modern Arab nationalism:

Nationalism, in the sense of a high degree of passionate consciousness of their distinctness from others by any people, stands, above all, in need of a spiritual support. In the absence of any powerful ideological trends, able both to mobilise the masses and reflect the genuinely Arab traditions, Islam is the only source which can provide such a support. It has been the main force behind all the great achievements of the Arabs in the past; its rise was marked by the end of the period of jahiliyyah - a period of ignorance, of dissension and of chaos; its history embodies the memories of the glorious days of Arab overlordship in the world.

"Although," says Hourani, "the movements of Arab and of Islamic revival lay emphasis upon different points it is impossible wholly to separate Arab nationalist

feeling from Islamic feeling. In most Arabs the two tend to flow together; the movements of national and of religious revival are energized by the same complex of desires and emotions within the individuals who have created and who sustain them; and the ordinary Muslim Arab is not conscious of belonging in one aspect of his being to the Arab community, and in another to the Islamic, but rather of belonging to a single integrated 'Arabo-Islamic' community in which he does not <sup>1</sup> clearly distinguish the Arab from the Islamic elements."

The same cannot be said in the case of the nationalistic movements of other Muslim peoples. The role of Islam in fostering Arab nationalism becomes more apparent when Arab nationalism is compared with Persian nationalism in recent history. Modern Persian nationalism has often had irreligious and, in certain cases, anti-religious features. This is because, among other reasons, Persia's ancient glory, manifested by the Persian Empire in pre-Muhammad days, came to be extinguished in the wake of the onslaught of Arab nomads under the banner of Islam. Distinction should be made, however, between the negative aspect of nationalism, consisting of thoughts and sentiments against foreign oppressors and internal tyrants, and its positive aspect marked by appeals and efforts towards social reforms. This brings us to the second argument in favour of Arabo-Islamic nationalism.

The negative aspect has surely drawn force and inspiration from the religious tenets which can be effectively invoked in any movement against the Western Powers and their Persian associates as "enemies of

---

<sup>1</sup> Syria and Lebanon, pp. 102-103.

Islam" - a religio-political tactic which attained its highest form through the works of Afghānī.<sup>1</sup> This was especially in evidence, in the case of Persia, during the Tobacco Monopoly crisis (1891), the Persian Constitutional Revolution (1906-7) and even the recent clamour for nationalising the oil industry (1951-53). In view of what we said before on the anti-colonialistic character of Arab religious circles, Arab and Persian nationalisms have a good deal in common from this point of view. The same does not hold good in regard to the positive aspect of nationalism. In Persian nationalism the positive aspect, on the contrary, has had more often than not an anti-religious character, as shown by the achievements of Riza Shah (1925-1941) and Dr. Muṣaddiq's head-on collision with Āyatullāh Kāshānī in carrying out social reforms. In short, religion in the eyes of conscientious Persian nationalists has been conceived rather as a means of achieving the more important aim of national salvation.

For the Arab nationalists, however, Islam is the end, the ideal and the culmination of material and spiritual efforts. Without Islam, Arab nationalism is shorn of its individuality and uniqueness. This is because of the important position of religion in the life of the Arabs. A Persian or an Indonesian can have as firm a belief in Islamic teachings and rules as has an Arab; but the Arabs' belief in Islam has the signifi-

---

<sup>1</sup> V. supra. p. 78 et seq.

cant overtone of pride; pride in the fact that God's final message to humanity was first delivered to them and then again, thanks to their resourcefulness, was carried across the earth and made known to millions of peoples of diverse qualities. This in fact is the reverse form of the statement which we have just made - that the Arabs regard their past glory and unity as the direct product of Islam. With the same conviction they believe that the past glory of Islam has been the direct result of it being originated with, and cherished by, the Arabs. Herder's definition of the religion of 'the primitive peoples' as "their character, their heart and their history"<sup>1</sup> finds perhaps its most telling example in the relationship between Arabs and Islam.

Arabism and Islam are thus fully identified with each other, and Islamic History becomes part and parcel of Arab history, and vice versa. This is in contrast to Western history, in which the religious and lay components are clearly discernible and easily separable.

Modern exponents of Arab nationalism propound Islam's role with varying degrees of emphasis. Most of them appreciate Islam as only one of the standards of Arab nationalism because of its function and ability to rally peoples collectively called "Arab" with divergent social, historical and ethnological characteristics. But there are also a number of writers who view Islam as the only genuine determinant of Arab nationality. Their nationalism is, to paraphrase Hourani, Arabo-Islamic. This is the main theme set out in Ahmad Shaibani's al unus ath thawrawiyah li'l qawmiyat 'al 'arabiyah (The Revolutionary Bases of Arab Nationalism).

---

<sup>1</sup>Hans Kohn, op.cit., p. 449.

Shaybānī startles believers in the universalistic teachings of Islam by describing the Prophet Muhammad as the first Arab "nationalist hero" (baṭal al qawmī).<sup>1</sup> He demonstrates the Islamic character of his nationalism by stating, with an almost religious fervour, that the ideals of the Arabs in politics as well as in all fields of social life should be the same as those of Islam.<sup>2</sup> His patently religious outlook reveals itself on nearly every topic which he treats. He extensively quotes the Caliph 'Umar (634-44) in connection with the qualities of a proper Muslim,<sup>3</sup> the evils of imperialism,<sup>4</sup> the individual's duties towards state<sup>5</sup> and social justice.<sup>6</sup> He even goes so far as to express the hope that the Arabs will achieve the status assigned to them by the Koran as leaders of humanity.<sup>7</sup>

The writer probably does not regard Islam as the only rallying bond of the Arab umma, but nowhere in his book can one get even a vague notion of any attribute of the Arab umma other than its religion. It is also evident that Islam in his eyes is no adequate basis either for a

---

<sup>1</sup> al usṣ al ṭhawrawīyah li'l qawmīyat' al 'arabīyah, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 65 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

clear understanding of the present problems of the Arabs or for discovering the best ways and means of solving these problems. The sublime examples set by such prominent Islamic leaders as the Caliph 'Umar in mercifulness, self-denial and modesty, so very frequently and passionately admired by the writer, cannot constitute the sole guiding principles for a people who, as the writer himself aptly puts it, are passing through the "phase of national creation, the phase of resuscitating the Arab umma".<sup>1</sup> It is not just that the Islamic principles and the instructions of great Islamic leaders in the past are not applicable to the complicated conditions and problems of the present and, especially, to those of a people faced by the massive challenge of a superior civilization. This the writer does not seem to believe. But what he does believe, and what is more important than the applicability of the Islamic principles to the modern world, is the fact that the Muslims have not subjected these principles to any critical study in order to bring them into line with the exigencies of modernism. The writer unequivocally admits this negligence:

"I cannot help," he says, "referring here to a deplorable fact, which is that the Muslims, since the death of the two great learned men, Jamāl ad Dīn Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh, have not nurtured any educated elite among themselves who would study Islam in the light of the sciences in modern times."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Shaibānī, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 159.



Unless such a critical study has been effected, any exclusively religious approach to the idea of Arab unity, and any appeal for a return to the Islamic teachings on such general matters as humanism and equality, is bound to induce intellectual stagnation and, eventually, reaction and fanaticism. In fact the writer's confession of the lack of this study weakens the two main contentions which he makes in his book. First, his belief that Islam can be made the social and political framework of Arab revival is proved unjustified when the realities of the Islamic world of today point to the failure of such an attempt. Even if the examples of Saudi Arabia and the Yemen, as the two most outstanding examples of this failure, can be dismissed on grounds of the anachronistic fanaticism of their rulers, then Pakistan, regarded by Professor Smith as the Islamic state of our time,<sup>1</sup> stands out as a source of great disappointment for writers like Shaibānī. Shaibānī's second contention is the complete compatibility of Arab nationalism and Islam. This is a far more serious point, which unfortunately does not receive adequate treatment in his book. Shaibānī readily disposes of the issue by saying that, since Islam is aiming at a universal state, the Arabs should, as the first step towards this goal, unite themselves with the purpose of their subsequent integration in a "united, unitary and universal world government".<sup>2</sup> Arab unity is therefore merely a transitory stage

---

<sup>1</sup>al nusūs ath thawrawīyah, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

in the human drive for unity. The crucial problem of the relationship between Islam and nationalism, including the contradiction between the spiritual message of Islam and the material character of nationalism, has thus been passed over in silence.

---

The problem has, however, attracted the attention of other Arab writers. The best expression so far of the Arab nationalist's view of his position towards Islam is that of the Iraqi 'Abd ar Raḥmān al Bazzās who concludes that "Arab nationalism which is devoid of the spirit of Islam is like a body without a soul".<sup>1</sup> Bazzās studied in London, where he helped to organize an Arab Students' society, al jam 'īyah 'arabīyah In Baghdad in 1939 he was a member of jam 'īyat 'al jawāl al 'arabī (The Arab "Roving" Society), which was banned in 1941. The author was then interned and was in three different camps during the war years. "Active both in Panarab and in Muslim organizations," says Haim, "he was often criticised for his illogical behaviour; people always told him that these two activities could not be compatible with one another."<sup>2</sup> In a pamphlet entitled al islām wa'l qawmīyat' al 'arabīyah (Islam and Arab Nationalism) containing the text of an address given in Baghdad in

---

<sup>1</sup>Sylvia G. Haim, "Islam and Arab Nationalism" in Die Welt des Islams, N.5., 3, 1953-54, p. 201.

<sup>2</sup>Haim, op.cit., p. 202.

January 1952 he tries to answer his critics by establishing the compatibility of Islam and Arab nationalism.

He starts off by discussing the wrong significance attributed, under the impact of the Western concepts, to the word "religion". Islam, he says, does not admit a narrow view of religion by restricting it within the limits of "worship, ritual and the spiritual beliefs".<sup>1</sup> Contrary to Christianity and Buddhism, it is "a social order, a philosophy of life, a system of economic principles, a rule of government".<sup>2</sup> After quoting Bertrand Russell's definition of Islam as a "political religion or socially directed religion" Bazzāz concludes that "since Islam is a political religion, it does not therefore necessarily contradict Arab nationalism, unless their political aims differ but this is unthinkable....."<sup>3</sup>

The writer then goes on to correct another misunderstanding - this time connected with Arab nationalism. Some people, he says, think that Arab nationalism can only be built upon racial appeal or racial chauvinism and would, therefore, be contrary to the universal nature of Islam. The exaggeration of some nationalists has undoubtedly been one of the important reasons for this misunderstanding and, no doubt, what some Umayyad governors, princes and wālīs have done in their en-

---

<sup>1</sup>Haim, op.cit., p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 204.

thusiastic tribal chauvinism and their racial propaganda<sup>1</sup> was contrary to the nature of Islam.

"But the Arab nationalism," declares Bazzāz, "in which we believe, and for which we call, is based... not on racial appeal but on linguistic, historical, cultural, and spiritual ties and fundamental vital interests."<sup>2</sup>

Bazzāz's next concern is to demonstrate that, since Islam was revealed first to the Arabs, "it is their own special religion".<sup>3</sup> Denouncing the efforts of some historians and men of letters to break the tie between Islam and Arab life and "to give the picture of Islam a cosmopolitan character", he states that Islam is mainly an Arab religion because "the Prophet is from them and the Qur'ān is in their language". He then cites a number of āyats from the Koran (xiv: 4, xliii: 24, xii: 2, xliiv: 58, ldi: 2, ix: 128, vi: 66, xdi: 107) in support of this thesis.<sup>4</sup> After enumerating other factors of Arab nationalism, i.e. "language, history, literature, customs and qualities",<sup>5</sup> Bazzāz examines Arab nationalism as "a political movement working to unite the Arabs and to give them self-government". Here again he finds Arab nationalism in agreement with Islam.

<sup>1</sup>Also V. supra, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Haim, op.cit., p. 204.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 207-211.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 211-214.

"The [Arab] national movement," he says, "is 'democratic', 'socialist', 'popular' and 'co-operative'. Islam, although it did not lay down in detail the organization of government, requires consultation, and does, without any doubt, accept completely democratic organization. Its financial legislation and juristic principles are, in essence, socialist..... It is enough to remember something of the life of the Prophet and of the Caliphs, to realise the extent of the co-operative and the popular spirit of Islam. The position being such, the national government for which we call does not, in any way, contradict Islam."<sup>1</sup>

To say this, however, is not to imply a call for Pan-Islamism which, "although it may be desired by all the pious Muslims, is not possible in practice, the reasons being many - geographical, political, social - or, at least, it is not possible under present conditions, even if we agreed to limit this union to the parts of the Muslim homeland which are contiguous".<sup>2</sup> And even if we assume that these parts could be united, then the unification of the "parts which speak the same language, inherit the same literature and have the same history, is more urgently needed, and more worthy of consideration".<sup>3</sup> In other words, Bazzāz, like Shaibānī, considers Arab unity as the cornerstone of the edifice of Islamic unity and, therefore, does not see any contradiction between the two. "The nearest analogy," he concludes, "for the relation

---

<sup>1</sup>Haim, op.cit., p. 214.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 214-215.

between them [Islam and Arab Nationalism] is that of the general to the particular".<sup>1</sup>

---

As opposed to the "Arabo-Islamic" nationalists, it is not of course difficult to find some modern Arab thinkers appealing for a dissociation between Arab nationalism and religion. Some of these writers base their case for this severance on the necessity of separating "church" from "state". Their arguments are more or less the same as those put forward by 'Alī 'Abd ar Rāziq, to which we referred in Chapter Two.<sup>2</sup> Thus in his book on the crisis of Arab thought, azmat' al fikr al 'arabi (Beirut 1954), Dr. Ishāq Mūsā al Ḥusainī contends that, whereas religion can not be divorced from society, just as the soul can not be divorced from the body, spiritual and temporal powers must be kept separate in order to ensure both the distinct and natural growth of each "in the interest of the human society as a whole"<sup>3</sup> and to safeguard Arab national solidarity.<sup>4</sup> Other writers substantiate their case by two arguments: one express, one suggested. Their express argument is that Arab history and Islamic history are separable - a view opposed to what Bazzās tried

---

<sup>1</sup> Halm, op.cit., p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> azmat' al fikr al 'arabi, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> V. supra, p. 119 et seq.

to establish. Their suggested argument is that many Christian Arabs have jointly contributed, especially during the First World War, to Arab nationalism. But their arguments mostly reveal stark self-contradictions. Typical of such writers is 'Abd al Malik 'Udah, lecturer in political science in the University of Cairo. He ascribes the failure of Arab nationalism during its first phase (1916-1941) to a number of causes, chief among which being the fact that:

"The philosophical principles and concepts of the (Arab) revolution (in the period between 1916 and 1941) were not clear enough to distinguish between Arab thought and Islamic thought. The first reason (for this) was that the Muslims, namely, the majority of the inhabitants of these countries, were not accustomed to the historical and philosophical distinction between the historical idea of Islamic unity and the religious idea of Muslim brotherhood."<sup>1</sup>

But 'Udah's explanation of the second reason indicates his inner belief in Islam as the main constituent part of Arab nationalism.

"The second reason," he says, "is that Arab nationalism is based on multiple bases, one of which being a common history... but we find that the Arabs' history and their active historical part in human evolution does not start until the rise of Islam."<sup>2</sup>

The writer does not apparently consider it necessary to explain the reasons for which the Arabs should have distinguished between "the historical idea of Islamic unity" and "the religious idea of Muslim brotherhood",

---

<sup>1</sup> Muḥāḍarāt Siyasiyah, maktabat' al anjilo'l miṣriyah, Cairo, 1958, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

although the second point which he mentions, namely, the identification of Arab history with Islamic history, strongly militates against such a distinction. Unmindful of the fact that his case has been thus seriously undermined, he immediately goes on to make the significant point which today seems to be the opinion of most non-Marxist, socialist-minded intellectuals in the Arab world:

"This is the cause of confusion in the minds of many nationalist leaders through the generations. In my opinion, this (confusion or identification of religion with nationalism) represents an overwhelming danger for, and an impediment to, the idea of nationalism and its active role in transforming the life of the Eastern societies as a whole. Our nationalist movement is based on the fact that the Arabs form a nation distinguished from other nations by their basic values; (this movement) appeals for Arab unity and requires the establishment of a government on modern and scientific bases."<sup>1</sup>

Echoes of the pleadings of leaders of Turkish renaissance prior to the First World War can be clearly heard in such clamourings. But writers sharing 'Udah's opinions on the desirability of a laic Arab nationalist movement seem to overlook, or play down, the fact that, while the Turks substituted at least a clearly revised form of Islam and a modernistic national ideology for orthodox Islam,<sup>2</sup> the Arabs have so far failed to do so.

---

<sup>1</sup>'Udah, op.cit., p. 115.

<sup>2</sup>To have a grasp of the Turks' achievement on this score see, inter alia, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Islam in History, pp. 161-205.



### The Pluralistic School

In contrast to the "Monistic School" the "Pluralistic School" conceives of Arab nationalism, not as an integral force, but rather as a conglomerate of various distinct factors. Foreseeing the contradictions into which they might run as a result of too exaggerated an assessment of the role of language, religion or any other single factor in the formation of Arab nationality, the followers of this "pluralistic school" adopt an eclectic attitude, avoiding any commitment to a single spiritual or material factor as a criterion of nationality. Whereas the Monistic School is, as was noted, under the influence of German writers, the Pluralistic school shows traces of the influence of French and British thinkers.

Thus, in his widely-read book, ma'ālim al hayāt al 'arabīyat' al jadīdah, Dr. Munīf ar Razzāz tries to steer clear of the dogmatic trends which seem to be very much alive in the Arab intellectual world. Dr. Razzāz typifies the present generation of Arab militant-intellectuals. He was born in Damascus on December 17, 1919. His years in primary school thus coincided with the French occupation and the growing bitterness of nationalist feelings in Syria. "I have not forgotten up to this day," he writes in his letter to the present author dated April 21, 1962, "the roarings of guns, the sight of incendiaries and the movements of French troops." His family moved to Jordan at the end of 1929. From that time until 1946, when he obtained his doctorate in medicine, his academic life was divided between 'Amman (Jordan), Jerusalem, Beirut and Cairo where

he completed his studies. This varied experience familiarized him with the different conditions and problems of the various Arab countries. In 1947 he became a member of "The National Committee for the Defence of Palestine". In 1949 he joined the ba'th, and was nominated as the Party candidate for 'Amman in the general election of 1951, but failed to be elected. His nationalist activities earned him the anger of the Government authorities. In 1953 he was deprived of his Jordanian nationality and banished from the country for six months. Thereupon he went to Damascus; it was there that he wrote ma'ālim al hayāt' al 'arabīyah which eventually won the First Prize of the Arab League. There have been four reprints of this book to date, making a total of 14,000 copies - a 'privilege' rarely conferred on a book of similar nature in any Middle Eastern country. In May 1953 he returned to Jordan. But after the declaration of military law in 'Amman in 1957 he was again arrested, and this time was kept in prison until the end of January 1959. Dr. Razzāz seems to have taken all these ordeals stoically. "There is nothing," he modestly writes in the same letter to the present author, "in my life worthy of mention. It has consisted of a series of storms in tea-cups!"

Dr. Razzāz's treatment of Arab nationalism and especially the criteria of the Arab nation is characterised by an almost "English" sense of non-commitment. The author discusses Arab nationalism at the end of his book under the title "The National Life" (hayāt' al qawmī) after analysing a wide range of social, economic and political problems such as

the various rights of a citizen, the nature of democracy and the political, economic and ethnical bases of society, all with special reference to the Arabs. Razzāz's explanation for relegating the discussion of Arab nationalism to the end of the book is revealing of his undogmatic approach to Arab problems:

"I relegated the question of Arab nationalism to the end of the book for a very simple reason indeed. I believe that what creates a unique nation, engenders a unique nationalism and sets the limits of a unique homeland is the unity of the problems facing that nation, the unity of the factors dominating its existence, its past and its future, and the unity of the solutions to these problems..... I found it necessary to explain these problems and the ways which, in my opinion, lead to their solution. Thus the reader would see, throughout the discussion, how the different governments in our Arab reality, in spite of the disparities in their circumstances, face similar problems, and how the solutions to these problems are identical for all these governments, whether they are monarchical or republican, backward or advanced, poor or rich...."<sup>1</sup>

This is not the proper place for dwelling upon Dr. Razzāz's remarks whether or not the problems facing all Arab countries are really so similar as to furnish the basis of their future unity. But it is interesting to note that, in propounding the case for Arab nationalism, Dr. Razzāz shifts the emphasis from the world of imponderables to agonizing tangible realities. His implied argument is that unity of the Arabs is necessitated not so much by their common linguistic, religious and historical bonds, as by the similarity, nay unity, of the obstacles

---

<sup>1</sup>ma'ālim al hayāt al 'arabīyat' al jadīdah, dār al 'ilm li'l malā'in, Beirut, 1959, (third edition), pp. 262-3.

standing in the way of their progress. This does not, of course, lessen the importance of language, religion and other factors about which the author is brief and circumspect. "It is a most difficult task," thus he disappoints the readers accustomed to the facile, peremptory and sweeping generalizations of some modern Arab writers, "to define exhaustively the limits of any nationality".<sup>1</sup> He immediately goes on to repudiate, although in mild terms, those schools of thought which emphasize a single spiritual or material factor in making such a definition.<sup>2</sup> Of language he believes that "by itself, it cannot be the basis of nationality; for, as we know, Britain and the United States share the same language but do not share the same nationality, whereas Switzerland, Belgium and India have each numerous languages and (still) each of them forms a single nation".<sup>3</sup> He voices the same disbelief in the ability of religion, or common territory, or historical bonds or common economic interests alone to determine the bounds of a nation and to give rise to nationalistic feelings.<sup>4</sup> But if none of the factors of history, geography, community of interests, language and religion can by itself create a nation and a national movement, then what does create it? Dr. Razzāz's reply to this question shows that he has accepted Renan's definition of nationalism

---

<sup>1</sup>Razzāz, op.cit., p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

in spite of Fuḡrī's denunciations. His remarks almost echo the words of Renan in his Qu'est-ce Qu'Une Nation? Says Dr. Razzāz:

"The fact is that qawmīyah is not determined by any of these factors (history, geography, etc.) It is primarily and finally determined by the awareness or consciousness, (Shu'ūr) of the whole people of their belonging to one nation. Some, all, or even a few, of the factors which we have just mentioned, as well as other factors, may link the people together. But the basic and unique factor which surpasses all these factors in strength and firmness is the awareness of the sons of the nation that they are the sons of a single nation. If this awareness slackens, the qawmīyah cannot be assisted whatsoever by the assemblage of components: if the awareness grows strong, it matters little if the people share only a few of the elements of a united nation."<sup>1</sup>

The basic similarity between Razzāz's words and the following famous definition of nationalism by Renan is worth considering:

"Une nation est une grande solidarité constituée par le sentiment des sacrifices qu'on a faits et de ceux qu'on est disposé a faire encore. Elle suppose un passé, elle se résume pourtant dans le présent par un fait tangible: le consentement, le désir clairement exprimé de continuer la vie commune. L'existence d'une nation est un plebiscite de tous les jours."<sup>2</sup>

Awareness, continues Dr. Razzāz, does not consist of superficial abstract emotions. It is rather the knowing of the unity of direction, of the community of interests and of the uniqueness of the vital centre which the nation occupies. The writer mentions, by way of example, the

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Razzāz, op.cit., p. 266.

<sup>2</sup>Qu'est ce qu'une nation? Paris, Calmann-Levy, 1882, p. 27. See also Kedourie, Nationalism, p. 80.

French nation which feels that something "above the language, the family bonds and religion" distinguishes it from the French-speaking people in other countries and from other foreigners. In the same manner the inhabitants of the southern and western parts of Belgium are aware that there is something which separates them from the French in spite of the community of language and, to a lesser degree, of shared past history and links them to another people with a different language. This awareness, which is evidently the essence of nationalism, is bound to rest on certain fundamentals: it is bound to be actuated and nurtured by a number of common features in the life of the given people. As regards the bases of Arab awareness, and thence Arab nationalism, Dr. Razzās finds them in five major sources which are analysed below:

- I The common territory or, as the writer calls it, "the unity of locale, ard", - a locale stretching from east to west and from north to south in the shape of a parallelogram split into countries with almost identical deserts, mountains and plains and, therefore, each inhabited by people divided into the Bedouins, badawī, and the town-dwellers, hadarī.
- II The Arabic language, which has been commonly spoken by these populations for fourteen centuries.
- III The common history, which needs little more explanation. Although, says the writer, the whole of Arab history since the rise of Islam is marked by secessions and dissensions, all small and great Arab countries, whether in the glorious days of Islam or during the time

of its decline, have been 'ploughing along the same furrow'. Besides, with the exception of the Umayyads in Spain, there has always been only one Islamic Caliphate. When the Arabs fell under the hegemony of the Ottoman Empire, they all shared this fate at the same time. When the Ottoman rule disintegrated, all Arab countries found themselves on the same path, under the shadow of Western Imperialism. And when the new nationalist movement started in the Arab countries, it started everywhere in the Arab world "in the same manner, along the same lines and towards the same goal".<sup>1</sup>

The correctness of the writer's remark on Arabs sharing a common history can hardly be contested, although opinions to the contrary are held by some contemporary Arab authors.<sup>2</sup>

But his statement on the unity of the course and aim of nationalistic movements in all Arab countries is open to serious doubts. Ever since the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 there have been numerous eruptions of the Arabs' ardour and wish for emancipation, unity and progress. But one can hardly see any similarity in the motives, methods and aims of these eruptions. There have been one or two major issues in every phase of this period such

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Razzāz, op.cit., p. 269.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Husain Mūnis, "al 'arab wa madihum" (The Arabs and Their Past), in ath thaqāfah (The Culture) 1951. The views of such authors have been critically discussed by Ḥuṣrī in his difa' an al 'urūbah, pp. 93-106.

as Turanian Chauvinism, Jewish nationalism or Western imperialism, which have accorded the Arabs' struggle for unity a semblance and even substance of unity. But against all these motives of unity there have been pertinent problems of far-reaching political consequences, both tactical and strategical, which have divided the Arabs and have occasioned dangerous and sometimes sanguinary conflicts between them. The desire for Arab unity, to mention one example, was, until some time ago, or perhaps precisely until the Egyptian revolution of 1952, a constant source of discord and acerbity between them. There have been men, like Muṣṭafā Kāmil<sup>1</sup> and Anton Sa 'ādah,<sup>2</sup> who, as we have seen, preferred their respective Egyptian and Syrian nationalisms to the wider concept of Arab unity. There have been Egyptians who have shown opposition to the idea of unity with other Arabic speaking peoples by expressing their desire to regain the glory of the pre-Islamic, Pharaonic Egypt.<sup>3</sup> There have also been Syrians who have emphasized the Phoenician origin of the Syrian people, but their nostalgic particularism has been far less strident than Egyptian Pharaonism.<sup>4</sup> No wonder that the announcement in the Egyptian Consti-

---

<sup>1</sup>V. supra, p. 140 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>V. supra, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup>V. supra, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>Hourani, op.cit., p. 133. Dr. Razzāz, op.cit., p. 271 et seq.



tution of 1956 that the Egyptian people are "an integral part of the Arab nation",<sup>1</sup> was hailed by Arab nationalists as a step forward and a gratifying relief.<sup>2</sup> After the parochialism and narrow-minded nationalism, one should refer to the medley of contradictory schemes which have been put forward even by the expounders of the idea of Arab unity for achieving their common purpose. The disagreements over the much notorious Fertile Crescent, the Greater Syria and the rest of (the Federal Union and the United Arab Republic) have been too radical to allow for any display of unity between their sponsors. The recent bitter war of words between the United Arab Republic and Iraq, the two major powers in

---

<sup>1</sup>Constitution of the Republic of Egypt. The following phrase in the preamble of the Constitution is also noteworthy: "We, the people of Egypt, realising that we form an organic part of a greater Arab entity, and aware of our responsibilities and obligations towards the common Arab struggle for the glory and prestige of the Arab nation...."

<sup>2</sup>"The inclusion of these phrases (the phrase in the preamble and Article One) in the text of (the Egyptian) Constitution is an important event worth emphasising in the history of the development of Arab nationalist thought in Egypt, and gives cause for rejoicing and appreciation. The fact is that Egypt embarked upon the path leading to Arab Awakening only a short while ago. Her progress along this path was slow and sluggish, until the Palestine catastrophe. The reason was that the Egyptian opinions on the nationalistic problems were surprisingly confused and divided among Pharaonic tendencies, Egyptian parochialism, Oriental affiliation and Islamic community. But the idea of Arab nationalism was vacillating between these various tendencies and could not easily find its way among the people. This state of affairs, however, rapidly changed after the Palestinian catastrophe. The idea of Arabism gained in strength from day to day, and started to overcome other tendencies with increasing speed, multiplied after the 1952 revolution." Ḥuṣrī, ara'wa shādīth fi'l cawmīyat' al 'arabīyah, p. 8.

the Arab world, both professing similar theoretical principles as the bases of their internal (Arab socialism) and external (positive neutralism) policies, is another example.

To say that Arab nationalists have so far been at variance with one another over the same ideas is not to deny that this variance is diminishing with the years, and that the alternatives to unity facing the Arab countries are today far less numerous than they were until only a decade ago. But the fact remains that what is usually referred to as Arab nationalism is actually a patchwork of disparate and conflicting ideas, and that its history since the First World War (not to speak about earlier periods) does not offer a consistent and even pattern. This is the reason why the very term Arab nationalism is dangerously misleading insofar as it makes a variegated movement with divided aims and loyalties look like a monolithic entity with unified objectives. This does not, of course, mean that in analysing this movement and in assessing its relations with the West one should not, as a measure of scholastic convenience, use the term in a general sense. We apply other similarly complicated terms, such as the Western civilization or the Western way of life, mostly in an indiscriminate way and without paying much attention to their subtleties.

IV The fourth base of Arab nationalism, continues Dr. Razzāz, is Islam. The writer reminds the reader that, by placing this factor after geography, language and history, he does not mean to diminish its

significance. In pursuance of his dialectical logic, he admits that religion by itself cannot delimit any nation or nationhood, since all religions, including both Islam and Christianity, embrace nations and groups with different characteristics. Nevertheless we would argue that the significant difference between Christianity and Islam is that Islam has tinctured the Arabs' thought, traditions, customs, myths, opinions and everyday life on a scale far larger than Christianity and, for that matter, any other religion has affected the spiritual and material life of its followers. This has been due, as has been previously noted, to the complete integration of Islam in the social and political structure of all Muslim countries, striking a sharp contrast with the Christian world where the dichotomy of the religious and the lay has been a reality. Therefore, Dr. Razzāz is right in saying that: "Islam in these (Arab and other) countries has been, not only a religion, but history, civilization and spiritual life, ḥayāt' al 'aqlīyah"<sup>1</sup> He regards this also as an explanation for the full integration of the Christian Arabs in the Arab civilization and the deep impact of Islam on their material and spiritual life.

- V. Dr. Razzāz concludes by saying that the fifth basis of Arab nationalism should be sought in the shared misfortunes and wants/ As  
of the Arabs.

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Razzāz, op.cit., p. 270.

referred to before, this community, which is in the writer's eyes the most real and reliable bond linking the Arabs together, forms the subject of the greater part of the book. He analyzes this community first in the political field. All Arabs, he says, are ruled by governments which do not represent their interests.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for the emergence of these unrepresentative governments are identical in all Arab countries. They are: firstly, the deplorable economic conditions of the masses, which render them impotent as a political force.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the disillusionment of the literate section of the population because of its inability to have any say in the running of the government and its resulting passivity.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, the defective electoral laws which, in some Arab countries, deprive the women of political rights and in all of them serve the interests of the upper classes by such measures as admitting only the rich to the election campaign or providing for "two-degree" elections.<sup>4</sup> Fourthly, the unsuccessful career of the political parties which are, almost everywhere in the Arab world, based, not on principles and ideas, but on personalities;

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Razzāz, op.cit., p. 64 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

their over-cautiousness in carrying out progressive measures; the ambiguity in their blue-prints which regularly hold out promises of promotion of national independence. The raising of the people's standing of living and the like, without explaining the means and ways of implementing these high-flown ideals; the anti-democratic nature of their organisations, where the leaders reign supreme, offering no opportunity to the rank and file to express themselves, and barring the way to young talent and, finally, as a consequence of all these defects, the growth of the one-party system in almost all Arab countries.<sup>1</sup>

In the economic field, the writer does not do justice to his own purpose: he does not, in other words, elaborate sufficiently on the similarity of the economic interests between Arab countries. This is both disappointing and puzzling since, as can be judged from the contents of the book as a whole, he seems to have an adequate grasp of, and an unmistakable preference for, Socialism. He often attempts to emphasize the economic undercurrents and bases of most of the Arabs' social problems.<sup>2</sup> The bulk of his chapter

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Razzāz, op.cit., p. 70 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>This has already been demonstrated in outlining his views on the political impotence of the Arab masses which, he thinks, is due to their economic privations (see the previous page). Elsewhere, analysing the cultural and educational problems of the Arab countries, he says that these problems can have no "real and profound solution unless with the change of the whole economic regime, and with placing it on the basis of serving the public instead of that of profiteering, and with the elimination of the class regime." (p. 161.)

on the economic aspects of Arab life is devoted to propounding the rights of individuals in all countries to be assured of work, of a minimum wage, of rest and of safeguards against unemployment. He also points out the importance of state control over the economic life of the country and its interference in favour of the poor and the downtrodden. The whole chapter bears a striking resemblance to Laski's discussion of the economic rights of the individual in his Grammar of Politics. But what the writer fails to do is to demonstrate cogently that there are actually similar economic conditions prevailing in all Arab countries, lending a vigorous reality to their unity in other fields. He gives a picture of this similarity by stating that all Arab countries are victims of feudal economics,<sup>1</sup> all of them possess ample amounts of natural riches such as oil and cotton,<sup>2</sup> all of them suffer from a low level of national production<sup>3</sup> and all of them fail to put into effect those economic rights of individual which the writer takes upon himself to enumerate in full.<sup>4</sup> But all these references are sketchy, meagre and, in the general context of the writer's economic interpretation of the Arabs' plight, unconvincing. What is needed is

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Razzāz, op.cit., p. 113 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 125 et seq.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 129 et seq.

to establish the Arabs' economic interest in unity by pinpointing concrete facts, quoting instructive statistics and criticising those who ignore, or deny, this interest.

Having disposed of the economic problems, Dr. Razzāz proceeds to explain the Arabs' backwardness in the social field. Conforming to his ever-present pattern, he does this in the form of passing remarks while discussing the social rights which, in general, an individual should enjoy in order to contribute his fullshare to the welfare of the society. On this score also the Arabs today find themselves in similar circumstances as all of them (excepting the Lebanese) suffer from a low level of literacy,<sup>1</sup> and receive inadequate attention from the Government, financial or otherwise, with regard to education<sup>2</sup> and health service.<sup>3</sup>

---

To sum up, as if in an attempt at forestalling Western criticism (and certainly under their impact), Dr. Razzāz conceives the necessity of Arab unity against a wide background of political, social and economic factors. He admits, though implicitly, the difficulty of bringing about this unity by clarifying its complicated nature and by explaining its

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Razzāz, op.cit., p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 159-161.

numerous pre-requisites. From this viewpoint, his study might prove disappointing for the emotional and the idealistic but it certainly displays a greater degree of realism and, therefore, can be more helpful to the cause of Arab unity, than those works which merely praise this unity and overlook the obvious hurdles in its way. Contrary to most protagonists of Arab nationalism, who over-simplify the issue by emphasising only one or other of the common features of Arabs such as religion or language and the like, Dr. Razzāz points out, although not always successfully, the plurality of the issues involved.

---

With added emphasis and, sometimes, in a more elaborate way all the factors concisely analysed above are enumerated as the pillars of the Arab umma by another Arab writer, the Syrian Muḥammad Izzah Darawzah, in his book al waḥdat' al 'arabīyah (Arab Unity). Under the heading "The Growth of the Bases of Arab Unity" he provides the reader with a lengthy analysis of the common features of the Arabs as a nation; his only difference, in this respect, from Dr. Razzāz and many other Arab analysts is that he introduces the racial unity as one - and so far as the order of matters goes - the most important, of these factors. The treatment of the racial unity of the Arabs is a rare phenomenon in the works of modern Arab writers who, as was noted in the case of Razzāz, mostly try to push it aside, or content themselves with a passing reference to it; this is either in deference to the anti-racial character of Islam or,



more important, because of the ominous ring of all claims to racial purity and unity in the second half of the twentieth century, especially in the face of a suspicious, disparaging West. Although Darawzah, on more than one occasion, expresses his firm belief in Islam as a great religion and a unifying force of the Arabs, this does not prevent him from dwelling upon the racial question at considerable length.

A more detailed exposition of Darawzah's racial outlook can be found in his voluminous book entitled tārīkh al jins al 'arabī (History of the Arab Race). Drawing on both European and Arab sources, he tries in the three volumes of the book to relate the pre-Islamic history of the Arabs. The dominant purpose of the book is to vindicate the position of the Arabs as "a race occupying a unique position among the leading and very active races of mankind".<sup>1</sup> It is, however, with his al waḥdat' al 'arabīyah that we are concerned here.

He starts off by emphasising that all Semitic peoples inhabiting the Arabian peninsula and its surrounding countries should, in fact, be called Arabs and not Semites,<sup>2</sup> since their original residence was the Arabian peninsula, and not Babylon, as some scholars would like to believe.

---

<sup>1</sup> tārīkh al jins al 'arabī, al maktabat' al 'aṣrīyah, Beirut, 1957, Vol. I, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> al waḥdat' al 'arabīyah, p. 26.

He argues this point by quoting Dr. Jawād Alī, Dr. Hasan Kamāl, Jurjī Zaidān and Ibn Khaldūn, as well as such European scholars as Bristide and Le Bon and many others, on the centrifugal movements of Arab emigrants from the heart of the Arabian peninsula in all directions - to Iraq, to Egypt, to Syria and to the maghrib.<sup>1</sup> It is no doubt on the basis of these statements that he modifies even the word Islam with the adjective "Arabic", al i-slām al 'arabī.<sup>2</sup>

On the question of the religious unity of the Arabs Darawzah is more emphatic than Ḥuṣrī and Dr. Razzāz. <sup>It is</sup> /also in his other book entitled ad dustūr al qur'ānī fī shu'ūn al ḥayāt (The Koranic Law on the Affairs of Life) that Darawzah gives a fuller treatment of Islam. His main concern in this latter book is to underline the social and political character of Islam by analysing the Koranic injunctions on a wide range of subjects, including government,<sup>3</sup> finance,<sup>4</sup> judicature,<sup>5</sup> defence and the holy war (iḥād),<sup>6</sup> propaganda,<sup>7</sup> social co-operation,<sup>8</sup> individual morals<sup>9</sup> etc. But,

---

<sup>1</sup> al waḥdat' al 'arabīyah, pp. 27-42.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> ad dustūr al qur'ānī fī shu'ūn al ḥayāt, dār iḥyā' al kutub al 'arabīyah, Cairo, 1956, p. 49 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 34 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 160 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 224 et seq.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 222 et seq.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 367 et seq.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 489 et seq.

in wahdah, Darawzah confines himself to defining the position of Islam as a factor of Arab unity. The religious unity of the Arabs, he says, is underlined, not only by the fact that nearly 93 per cent of all Arabs are Muslims, but also by the inclusion of the majority of them in the Sunni fold.<sup>1</sup> He regards as insignificant not only the differences between the two main sects in Islam, i.e. Sunnism and Shiism, but also the various divisions and subdivisions within each of these sects.<sup>2</sup>

Although, as the writer says, these differences and schisms do not in fact touch the essence of Islam, it can not be gainsaid that they have at times represented serious impediments to understanding between the Arabs. On this occasion one must recall the sinister history of the Sunni-Shi'i internecine quarrels in Iraq, which have sometimes been reckoned as one of the causes of the social and political instability in that country. Such quarrels have undoubtedly decreased recently both in range and in intensity; but this has been due less to conscious, deliberate and well-organised conciliatory moves than to the rallying effect of foreign pressure and oppression.

Contrary to some Arab apologists who tend to engage in prolonged theological arguments to demonstrate Islam's superiority over Christianity, Darawzah maintains that both religions seek to achieve the same things.

---

<sup>1</sup> al wahdat' al 'arabiyyah, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 78-79.

"There is no difference," he says, "between the aims and appeals of Islam and Christianity .... Islam admits the sanctity of Jesus Christ, his nobility and (venerates) his testament. There are no disparities between Islam and Christianity either in the political, governmental, institutional and legislative fields or in respect to the economic and social rights and duties of the individual.... The Islamic injunctions clearly and emphatically appeal for generosity, equity, amity and good behaviour. Pure Christianity introduces kindness and peace, and denounces personal rancours and desires."<sup>1</sup>

The similarity between these words and what we quoted before from Ṭāhā Ḥusain<sup>2</sup> on the relation between Islam and Christianity is too close to be dismissed as mere coincidence. The writer ascribes occasional ill-feelings between the Christian and Muslim Arabs to foreign intrigues. Thus, while he emphasises the racial and religious unity of the Arabs, he tries not to make this appear in any way offensive to the Western and Christian world. Considering that the concepts of Arab nationalism, at least for the time being, are of anti-Western implications, and that, with the continuation of the Arab-West disputes, there is a growing danger of these disputes being interpreted in exclusively religious terms, such broad-minded and detached approaches to the relations between Islam and Christianity are most welcome. The explosion in the Lebanon in the summer of 1958,<sup>3</sup> where the Muslim and Christian sections of the populations took up arms against each other over a basically political issue, was a dire reminder of the fact that communal relations within the Arab countries are not always governed by the liberal Koranic injunctions concerning the dhimmis. If the drift to an "internal" crusade in the Arab world is to be stopped, sustained

---

<sup>1</sup> al waḥdat' al 'arabīyah, pp. 81-82.

<sup>2</sup> V. supra, pp. 54-55.

<sup>3</sup> V. infra, p. 250 et seq.

efforts are required to take the edge off the religious clashes.

Darawzah, like most of the Arab writers, treats the important question of similarity of the social, cultural and legislative systems of the Arab countries in a very brief manner. But, unlike Dr. Razzāz, who sought this similarity rather in the defects and shortcomings of the system, Darawzah discerns it in their underlying principles. Laws, traditions, customs and arts of the Arab peoples, says the writer, are all tinged by the Islamic teachings.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Arabs are governed by the same penal and civic regulations<sup>2</sup> as laid down in the Koran and expressed through the fiqh and, although many innovations and adaptations have taken place since the middle of the last century, "the principles of the Islamic shari'ah, under which the Muslims have lived for a considerable time, have retained their validity for most of the Arabs, as these principles have become an integral part of the life of the Muslims, who form the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the Arab homeland".<sup>3</sup> Another proof of this similarity is that Western civilization,

---

<sup>1</sup>al waḥdat 'al 'arabiyyah, p. 85 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>The Islamic law does not present such a homogeneous picture as Darawzah suggests here. Notwithstanding the main division in Islam, i.e. that between Sunnism and Shiism, the subdivisions and schisms based on each of these two sects have inevitably resulted in great differences and alterations as to multiple problems of law and commerce. See Asaf A. A. Fyze, Outlines of Muhammadan Law, Oxford University Press, Second edition, London, 1960, pp. 13-43; Joseph Schacht, The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence, Oxford University Press, London, 1950.

<sup>3</sup>al waḥdat' al 'arabiyyah, p. 86.

by coming into contact with the Arabs, has caused identical changes in the social systems of all Arab countries,<sup>1</sup> which would not have been possible had these systems been different from one another. On the question of the best political and administrative shape which a united Arab State should take, Darawzah shows his preference for the federal pattern of unity in his discussions on the Constitutions of the United States of America, the Soviet Union and India as "examples of the united state" which he regards as the correct organizational (jihāzī) method of Arab unity.<sup>2</sup> In this stand he is joined by many other nationalists.<sup>3</sup>

The Arab nationalists' appreciation for Western federalism dates back to the days of Hamidian despotism (1879-1908). Two of the main Arab nationalist societies of that period, i.e. al 'ahd and al qaḥṭanīyah, set the pattern for Arab borrowing from Western federalism "by suggesting the transformation of the remaining Arab and Turkish parts of the Empire into an Arab-Turkish federation, to be established on the image of what looked to be a federal Austro-Hungarian Empire".<sup>4</sup> The failure of their attempt together with the final breakdown of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War "marked the end of any universal imperial or-

---

<sup>1</sup> al waḥdat' al 'arabīyah, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 642, 645 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> Ḥuṣrī, difa' an al 'urūbah, p. 151 et seq., p. 174 et seq., p. 182 et seq. Neguib, Egypt's Destiny, p. 270 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Hassan Saab, The Arab Federalists of the Ottoman Empire, p. 277.

ganisation"<sup>1</sup> in the Middle East. What was left of the Arabs' scheme of "imperial federalism" was, therefore, only its federal component.

"As the Arab nationalists," says Dr. Hassan Saab, "of el-Ahd sought salvation in the imitation of the Austro-Hungarian federal pattern, Arab nationalists in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq contemplate today the imitation of the federal pattern of organization of the United States, Switzerland and the Soviet Union."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the United States and the Soviet Union, the two powers at present directing the course of human civilization, have federal organization, ~~and in spite of their differences~~ <sup>in spite of their differences</sup> in other respects, enhances "the appeal of federation to all human cultural, regional, or national large groups which aspire to unification".<sup>3</sup>

On the whole, Darawzah's analysis of the components of the Arab Nation is comprehensive insofar as he speaks of the spiritual life of the Arabs. But there is an evident and lamentable neglect on the part of the writer even to face, without assessing, the economic and social realities in the Arab world. His reference to the social characteristics of the Arabs is, as can be gathered from the previous passages, short and perfunctory. Besides, it does not treat these characteristics with the adequate scientific precision and detail required for his own purpose. He remains silent on the administrative organisations of various

---

<sup>1</sup>Saab, op.cit., p. 278.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

Arab countries, each of which, owing to the domination of a different foreign power, has by now developed unique features. His book does not provide an adequate analysis of the economic factors in their relation to Arab unity. This inevitably leaves us with the impression that the writer has shunned the economic issue because he himself is convinced of the lack of an economic unity in the Arab world. In another chapter, on the "Necessity of Unity",<sup>1</sup> Darawzah touches upon the economic problems of the Arabs in a bid to prove that, by pooling their resources and energies, they will achieve prosperity and prevent these resources from being dissipated and wasted. But this is quite another matter. It is one thing to prove that a given group of people do, in fact, form a nation because of the community of their interests and characters. It is quite another matter to convince them that it is in their interest to achieve this unity. Darawzah performs this second task successfully. But, perhaps like other advocates of Arab unity, his arguments on the first question are rather timid and defective.

---

Responding to some Western doubts about the possibility of realising Arab unity in the teeth of various social, political and economic

---

<sup>1</sup> al waḥdat' al 'arabīyah, p. 90 et seq.



differences between the Arab peoples, a number of writers try to sound realistic by conceding such differences. Perhaps typical of this group of writers is Nabīh Amīn Fāris, Head of the Department of History at the American University of Beirut, to whom we have referred in our discussion on the Arabic language. In his book min az zawīyat' al 'arabīyah (From the Arab Viewpoint), a collection of disjointed articles on the problems of the Arab world, the pillars of Arab unity are said to be language, history, religion, spiritual life ('aqlīyah) and what he calls "the pressure of new factors". He divides these last factors into external and internal. The external factor is represented by the menace of colonialism and its attendant miseries.<sup>1</sup> By internal factors he means, on the one hand, the development of mass media and educational systems within the Arab countries and, on the other, the expansion of "new economic plans transcending the frontiers of a single (Arab) country and linking together the brotherly states".<sup>2</sup> The writer gives no inkling as to what these economic plans are, although he emphasises that "the economic factors are at present the greatest tangible factors of unity"<sup>3</sup> and that "the political union or unity between the Arab countries remains in the realm of unrealizable dreams unless it is preceded by economic union or

---

<sup>1</sup>Nabīh Amīn Fāris, min az zawīyat' al 'arabīyah, dār bairūt, Beirut, 1953, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

unity".<sup>1</sup> If the economic factors are as essential for Arab unity as the writer seems to believe, then he should provide the reader with a far wider explanation of the potentialities which the Arab countries enjoy in order to lend reality to their economic unity. In one place he hints that "the factors and the crude materials of such economic and social unity exist, although they lie untapped".<sup>2</sup> In another place he mentions "the differences between the economic, social and cultural standards"<sup>3</sup> of the Arab peoples as setbacks to the cause of their unity. Although one might imagine the case of two countries with differences in their economic standards and systems, and still with potentialities for merging their economic resources, this does not absolve the writer from the task of ironing out his self-contradiction by stating facts and figures.

One novel and interesting feature in Fāris' book, as compared with the other works surveyed in this thesis, is the view that the Lebanon should assume the leadership of the contemporary movement of Arab nationalism.<sup>4</sup> He somewhat undermines his case by admitting that emotionalism

---

<sup>1</sup>Fāris, op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

has induced him to make this plea, as his ancestors, up to seven generations back, lived and died in the Lebanon. Emotions apart, the question of the Lebanese leadership of the Arab nationalist movement in its present phase cannot be taken very seriously, but as Fāris apparently is not the only person who makes this appeal it would seem appropriate to dwell on the subject at some length. Hourani has given an account of the "historical and ethnological" views of the Lebanese people in regard to Arab nationalism which can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, there are some Lebanese who regard themselves as simply a branch of the Arab people, and their destiny as indistinguishable from that of the Arab people as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, there are some who, although admitting "the slightly different character" of the Lebanese history and tradition as compared with the Arab peoples, do not regard this difference as forming the basis of a special mission or destiny at present. A third group believes in a special although restricted function for Lebanon which is to provide an asylum for those whose religious loyalties or racial origins make it difficult for them to live in neighbouring regions. The function is restricted because "it can only be actualized under perpetual foreign protection or guarantee, since the hills and valleys of Lebanon no longer immunise her from interference; and secondly, be-

---

<sup>1</sup>One of the most prominent, contemporary exponents of this school is perhaps Kamāl Janbalāt, leader of the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party. See his *ḥaqīqat'ath thawarat'al lubnāniyah, dār an nashr al 'arabiyyah*, Beirut, 1959, pp. 97 et seq., 125, 156, 166.

cause it offers to the communities who seek refuge in her no ideal except to be left alone and to live on the margin of history". The fourth school is that of those Christians who maintain that Lebanon should become fully a part of the Western Christian world and that she should not be politically or in any way a part of the Arab world. Finally, there are some who wish Lebanon to remain Christian without, at the same time, ceasing to be Arab and to some it is a centre from which Christian and in general Western influences can radiate to Arab Asia.<sup>1</sup>

Hourani maintains that the first two views are held by many of the younger generation of the Druzes and Greek Orthodox Christians but by fewer of the Maronites, the third view by those, to whatever sect they belong, who are deeply suspicious of the Sunni Muslims and at the same time conscious of their own weakness. The fourth and fifth views are held only by Christians.<sup>2</sup>

In the face of such confessional and ethnological diversities<sup>3</sup> and with her economic and cultural conditions considerably at variance with

<sup>1</sup>This school of thought is now represented by Pierre Jumayil, a Christian of French education, leader of kata'ib al lubnāniyah (Phalanges Libanaises) who emphasize that they desire good relations with the West, but that their first loyalty is towards Lebanon not towards Arabism or Westernization. (See Arnold Hottinger, Zu'ama' and Parties in the Lebanese Crisis of 1958, The Middle East Journal, Spring 1961, p. 137.)

<sup>2</sup>Syria and Lebanon, pp. 133-135.

<sup>3</sup>See also Clyde C. Hess Jr., Herbert L. Bodman Jr., Confessionalism and Feudality in Lebanon Politics, The Middle East Journal, 1954, pp. 10-26.

those of other Arab countries, Lebanon seems to have a very slender chance of leading the Arab nationalist movement in which Islam, at least at present, occupies a predominant position.

Fāris' book was written in 1953, that is to say, before the Lebanese civil war of the summer of 1958. Although political prediction, especially in the case of the unpredictable Arab affairs, is as unwise as unreliable, it would not have been humanly impossible in 1953, with the above divisions and the examples of the civil wars of 1841, 1845 and 1860 in mind, to foresee a clash of religious interests in the Lebanon especially when the war of loyalties in the Arab world was assuming a clearer shape out of its previous confused welter. The Lebanese bloodbath of the summer of 1958 and its aftermath of a more subtle and sensitive system of Muslim-Christian co-existence<sup>1</sup> should have frustrated all hopes for the Lebanese leadership. The fact, however, remains that for a long time to come the Lebanon is to stay ahead of practically any other Arab country, not only in cultural and educational fields, but also in the domain of political consciousness and dynamism.

---

<sup>1</sup>In his inevitably biased account of the 1958 Civil War, Janbalāṭ (supra, p. 250) tries to represent the religious conflicts among the Lebanese as manifestations of the much more important political differences. He especially holds the Christian leaders responsible for the exploitation of the religious sentiment of the masses in the interest of political aims. (ḥaḳīqat 'ath thawarat 'al lubnānīyaḳ, pp. 116-118, 146-147.)

For the time being the majority of books and pamphlets on various aspects of Arab nationalism are written by the Lebanese, and even those by other Arab writers are mostly published in the Lebanon. Certainly the fact that nearly ninety per cent of the Lebanese are literate is partially responsible for this. But far more important is the high measure of political liberties enjoyed by her people, at least so far as the freedom of political polemics and discussions are concerned. In the past, also, the most enlightened books on Arab nationalism have appeared in the Lebanon. Whatever their defects, these books and publications possess the merit of representing divergent views and opinions about the Arabs and their politics as opposed to the literature prevalent in the other Arab countries, which tends to be highly "regimented", tediously uniformed and dangerously apologetic. But political consciousness is not the only prerequisite for political leadership. This is as true in the case of personalities as it is of countries. If qualities other than political awareness, such as boldness, organising ability and astuteness are required to make a person competent for leadership, far more complicated and subtle conditions are necessary in order to enable a country to be accepted as worthy of political leadership. Lebanon, undoubtedly, excels in political sophistication. This very fact, coupled with the delicate system of her confessional composition, accounts for her temperate and sometimes conservative stand on the issue of Arab nationalism. And one of the causes of the civil war of 1958, according to those who raised the banner of rebellion against the Sham'un Government, was the departure from this

temperate line.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that a country which, owing to her own internal problems, has to prefer vagueness and silence on many issues, cannot take the lead of a movement whose problems require bluntness and courage. As a last word, we must say that the Christian participation in the Lebanese administration is another reason which should disqualify Lebanon from Arab leadership at least in the eyes of Fāris who, now, contrary to what he thought only about a decade ago,<sup>2</sup> assumes Islam as one of the main features of the Arab umma.

---

#### Arab "Jacobin Nationalists"

The third, and the last school of Arab nationalists is characterized by its concern for the environmental changes which should take place in the Arab world prior to the realization of Arab unity. We have metaphorically called them Arab Jacobin nationalists since they possess all the characteristics associated with this term in the history of political movements: 'intolerance of dissent, reliance on militarism, religious intensity and appeal, and missionary zeal'. In the words of an Arab writer, they call "for drastic alterations in the structure of Arab society"

---

<sup>1</sup> Janbalāt, haqīqat'ath thawarat'al lubnāniyah, p. 58 et seq., pp. 112-113.

<sup>2</sup>In his book entitled The Living Arabs (Beirut 1947), Fāris ascribes the elements of discord in the Arab world to the fact that "Islam - as a policy - did not provide for the concept of one nation".

revolting "against the quasi-feudal system of land tenure, and economic, social and political stratification of Arab society on the basis of that system".<sup>1</sup>

The most notable representative of this school is undoubtedly the Syrian Mīshīl 'Aflaq, who has been known as "the philosopher of the Arab Renaissance" (faillasūf al ba'eth al 'arabī). 'Alfaq studied history in France in the years 1928-1932, and after his return to Syria engaged in the teaching of history. He took an active part in the Iraqi revolt of 1942, as well as in the Palestinian war of 1948. But his most important achievement was the creation in 1940 of the first socialist party in the Arab world called ḥizb al ba'th al 'arabī<sup>2</sup> (the Arab Renaissance Party) together with a number of his close friends including Akram Hourani.<sup>3</sup> Before that he is said to have been one of the leaders of the Syrian Communist Party.<sup>4</sup>

'Aflaq has summarized the aims of the ba'th in three words: Freedom (hurriyah), Socialism (ishtirakiyah) and Unity (wahdah).<sup>5</sup> All these three aims are pursued with an eye on the interests and ideals of

<sup>1</sup> Sayegh, Arab Unity, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Mīshīl 'Aflaq, ma'rakat' al maṣīr al wāhid, dār al ādāb, Beirut, 1958, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 330.

<sup>5</sup> ma'rakat' al maṣīr al wāhid, pp. 33 et seq., 135.



all the Arab peoples. The two main pillars of his movement are, then, socialism and nationalism. It would be useful to analyze 'Aflaq's interpretation of socialism and nationalism in order to appreciate yet another aspect of the Western impact on modern Arab political thought.

An important point to be noted about 'Aflaq's 'Arab socialism' is its estrangement from Marxism and, of course, Communism. He is against all materialistic interpretation of history which is the very essence of Marxist philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

"The Communist philosophy," he writes, "is based on the belief in the matter, interpreting the historical and social evolutions on the basis of the economic factor which it erects into an absolute finality .... But the philosophy of the Arab Renaissance (ba'th) does not accept this materialistic theory. It maintains that the spiritual factor exercises immense influence on the evolution of history and the progress of humanity. It is therefore neither irrelevant nor contradictory to Arab spiritual movements including Islam."<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere he adduces a more interesting argument for his rejection of Communism. Punning on the words gharb (West) and gharīb (alien), he says that Communism is "a child of modern Western thought and Western conditions", steeped in "the revengeful Judaism" of Marx<sup>4</sup> and, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> ma'rakat' al maṣīr al wābīd, p. 18 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Lefebvre, Problèmes Actuels du Marxisme, Press Universitaire de France, Paris, 1958, p. 41 et seq.

<sup>3</sup> 'Aflaq, fi sabīl al ba'th al 'arabī, dār aṭ ṭallī'ah (? Beirut), 1959, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 71. See also p. 15.

alien to the ideas and needs of the Arabs. He finds traces of Communistic thoughts in those movements of past and contemporary Arab history which were notorious for their anti-Arab activities: a) in the shu'ubi<sup>1</sup> stirrings of the Abbasid period which called for "the Communism of wealth and property, dissolution of family, and abandonment of religion, and denigrated the Arab umma", (b) in the "Frenchified way of thinking" which "has been poisoning the modern Arab movement" ever since Napoleon's expedition to Egypt. "Small wonder, then," he writes, "if the French in Syria have been for years emphasizing in their universities and teachings these su'ubi chapters of Arab history,<sup>2</sup> even giving an exaggerated admiration of su'ubis."

But if this socialism is not Marxist, then what is it? 'Alfaq does not give any clear answer to this question, a question which, especially in view of the innumerable variations of non-Marxist socialism in our divided world<sup>3</sup> is of the utmost pertinence. Yet it is possible to form a general idea of 'Aflaq's 'Arab socialism' from his numerous essays and

---

<sup>1</sup> shu'ubiyyah "partisans of the Gentiles" began with the contention that all Muslims were equal and finished "in some cases by declaring the Arabs inferior to many other races". Every shu'ubi "vaunted particularly the claims to distinction of his own nationality, whether Syrian, Nabathaeon, Egyptian, Greek, Spanish or Persian; but the last named were at once the most vehement and the most numerous." (E. G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Cambridge University Press, 1902, Vol. I, pp. 265-266.)

<sup>2</sup> fi sabil al ba'th, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Norman Mackenzie, Socialism: A Short History, Hutchinson's University Library, London, 1949, p. 11.

articles. Firstly the socialism of his conception is merely a servant of Arab nationalism, a means (wasīlah) of achieving nationalist aims. It is not therefore an end in itself, and it is a far cry from internationalism.

"Our socialism," he says, "is a means of bringing about our national renaissance."<sup>1</sup>

"Our Party is not only Socialist. Nor is socialism its first attribute. It is an Arab party, the party of Arab Renaissance."<sup>2</sup>

"In the hierarchy of values, Arab unity is higher than socialism."<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, this socialism is not so much a detailed system of economic reforms as an ideal state of equality and justice. It is a protest against the 'material poverty and physical squalor', not of capitalism, but of feudalism, which is the prevailing pattern of socio-economic relations in the Middle East. It is neither against the institution of private ownership nor against the right of inheritance.<sup>4</sup>

In both these aspects, i.e. the subordination to nationalism and the upholding of spiritual values, as well as <sup>in regard to</sup> private ownership, Arab Socialism is in complete accordance with Asian Socialism.

<sup>1</sup> ma'rakat' al magīr, pp. 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> fī sabīl al ba'th, p. 93.

"In Asia," says Alex Josey, "a Socialist is first a nationalist, since both the socialists and nationalists, in opposing the Western colonialism, automatically oppose feudalism or capitalism with which it is associated."<sup>1</sup>

A more interesting characteristic of the Asian socialist is his concern for equality which is often presented to be of a mystical nature. Perhaps the best example of this association between socialism and egalitarianism can be found in Gandhi's works.

"Socialism," he says, "is a beautiful word and, so far as I am aware, in Socialism all the members of society are equal - none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism."<sup>2</sup>

In view of the "universalist" concepts of Islam - as referred to in the introduction of this thesis<sup>3</sup> - the Muslim mind is perhaps more receptive to the egalitarian spirit of Socialism than the Indian mind. Hence the attraction of socialism for many religious-minded Arabs.

---

The essence of 'Aflaq's nationalism is the renaissance (ba'th) of the Arab peoples, by which he means their revolt against "all the forces of evil and corruption within and without".<sup>4</sup> Ba'th is therefore

---

<sup>1</sup>Alex Josey, Socialism in Asia, Donald Moore, Singapore, 1954, p.2.

<sup>2</sup>M. K. Gandhi, Socialism of my Conception, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1957, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>v. supra, pp.3-4.

<sup>4</sup>ma'rakat' al masjid al wahid, p. 113.

at once a renaissance and a revolt. In his view it is only through this revolt that the Arab people can recover their national identity. Such a revolt "awakens the people (sha'b), stirs their sense of responsibility, and incites them to co-operation and activity whilst the waverer and the intriguer are exposed and discredited in the process!"<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps this conviction which makes him so contemptuous of any academic exposition of the factors of Arab unity.<sup>2</sup> However exaggerated may be his interpretation of ba'th as the main source of Arab unity, he sounds a realistic note by saying that the formation of the United Arab Republic in 1958 was caused not so much by the agencies of concrete economic and social conditions in Egypt and Syria as by the similarity in their 'revolutionary policies'.<sup>3</sup> By dissociating himself from the economic aspects of socialism 'Aflaq rids himself of all the doctrinal contradictions that might arise in his call for 'Socialist revolution'. But the case is not so simple with those Arab revolutionary thinkers who want to apply a full-blooded, Marxist socialism to the particular conditions of the Arab world.

As a representative of this 'revolutionary' school we might mention the Lebanese, Dr. Jurj Ḥannā. He was born in 1891, graduated from the American University of Beirut in 1912 and obtained his doctorate in

---

<sup>1</sup> ma'rakat' al maṣīr al waḥid, p. 113. Also pp. 122, 140, 142, 144 et seq where he describes the Algerian rebellion against France as one of the most glorious manifestations of the Arab nationalist ba'th.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 58, 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 73, 76-77, 80, 83.

medicine in 1916. He served as a soldier in the Ottoman Army in the First World War. After the War he returned to Beirut and founded a maternity hospital. "But my Lebanese nature," he writes in his personal letter to the present author,<sup>1</sup> "did not allow me to remain ensconced in the health service. I therefore took part in the 1943 revolution and was elected to the National Congress". It was the National Congress which, together with the youth organization, controlled the revolution.<sup>2</sup> During the Palestine war he was appointed Head of the Relief Committee. Through his numerous articles, pamphlets and books, Dr. Ḥannā has established his fame as one of the leading, progressive theorists of Arab nationalism.

Dr. Ḥannā is Marxist by conviction. "I believe in Marxism," he writes in the same letter, "but do not have any connection with the Communist Party." His nationalism is therefore an accommodation of 'historical materialism' to the specific condition of the Arab world. "Nationalism," he writes, "does not consist of a metaphysical consciousness (shu'ūr ghaibī); rather, it consists of a consciousness occasioned by circumstances which are mostly material."<sup>3</sup> He conceives Arab society as a vortex of class struggle in which the "feudal lords exploit the peasantry

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Ḥannā wrote this letter (dated April 20, 1962) in reply to a query by the present author about his biography.

<sup>2</sup>Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Jurj Ḥannā, waqī' al 'ālam al 'arabī, dār al 'ilm li'l mala'in, Beirut, 1952, p. 127.

and the capitalists exploit the workers". Feudal lords and capitalists form only a minority. The majority of the Arab nation "wallow in poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and humiliation".<sup>1</sup> In world affairs, his sympathies lie with the Soviet Union. "In spite of," he writes, "the anti-Soviet policy of Arab governments, in spite of their participation in anti-Soviet alignments, the Soviet Union has never shown any hostility towards the Arab world."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Ḥannā enumerates the bases of Arab nationalism as follows:

- a) unity of language,
- b) unity of history,
- c) unity of destiny (maṣīr) and,
- d) unity of interests.

In explaining the first two factors he is in complete agreement with other exponents of Arab nationalism. He sometimes even strikes quite a few "conservative" notes which are out of tune with some of his Marxist conceptions of the Arab world. In his analysis of language he is especially emphatic about its influence on human thoughts and ideas, attaching great importance to the Arabic language in engendering the scientific and philosophical movements of the "Golden Era" of Arab history.

"It was," he says, "the Arabic language which awakened the Arab movement after its long slumber. The works of

---

<sup>1</sup>Ḥannā, op.cit., p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

the Arab, or Arabicized, leaders of Islamic thought and philosophy in the medieval age, such as Ibn Khaldūn, Ghazzālī, Avicenna, Averroes, Rhazes and Ibn Ḥunayn were the main agents of the age of awakening."<sup>1</sup>

From this he deduces the importance of the Arabic language in the emergence of Arab nationalism, regarding the achievements of Yazījī, Bustanī, Ahmad Fāris ash Shidyāq, 'Abduh and Shawqī as "the causes of Arab awakening".<sup>2</sup>

In speaking about Arab history, Dr. Ḥannā pursues the same 'traditionalist' line. He even refers to the Arabs' community of race<sup>3</sup> - a rare feature in any Marxist analysis of nationalist movements. As regards religion, while he castigates the Muslim clergy as the supporters of "the exploiters of the people",<sup>4</sup> he appreciates the role of the Koran and Islam in bringing about Arab unity.

But it is in the writer's discussion on the remaining factors, namely "the unity of destiny" and "the unity of interests", that he displays revolutionary concepts. In this discussion, Dr. Ḥannā takes an express stand against all the existing governments in the Arab world, and this is what affords him a distinct position among Arab theorists. This may seem natural in the case of any Arab intellectual in 1952, when Nāṣir was still an obscure figure and the Iraqi revolution seemed a remote possi-

---

<sup>1</sup>Ḥannā, op.cit., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 15. See also pp. 21, 59, 67, 76, 94.



bility. But Dr. Ḥannā's anti-government arguments go deeper than occasional tirades against this or that particular Arab government. He is often at pains to make clear that in appealing for Arab unity he is thinking, not of governments, but of peoples. "The unity of peoples," he says, "is more important than the unity of their governments and states". "The Arab world has stumbled into a deplorable situation indeed. It is neither wrong, nor exaggerated, to say that this has been caused by the lack of social, patriotic and political consciousness in the peoples, and by the monopoly of their leadership being in the hands of rulers, kings and statesmen."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ḥannā uses all these arguments to substantiate his views on the historical unity of the Arabs - to prove that all the divisions in the Arab world have been due to the ill-will or inefficiency of the Arab governments.

But on the question of the Arabs' unity of interests, the writer finds himself on <sup>an</sup> uncertain ground, especially in the light of his introductory remarks emphasising the paramount role of class struggle in social and political developments. If, as his remarks suggest, Dr. Ḥannā accepts the Marxist axiom that all history is a register of conflicts between various social classes, then how is he to reconcile this with his view on the unity of interests between the Arab peoples? If he admits

---

<sup>1</sup>Ḥannā, op.cit., p.5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

the division of the Arab nation into warring classes<sup>1</sup> how can these classes be bound together by common interests? Dr. Ḥannā does not give any answer to these questions. All he does is to describe, in broad terms, the impoverishment of the Arab masses and their possession of untapped natural resources as the bases of their common interests. The Leninist principle that, in the anti-imperialist phase of the national struggle, all class differences can and should be submerged in the interest of national unity does not seem to be of any assistance to him, because he has concerned himself not only with the passing phase of the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arabs, but also with the whole range of their efforts for unity.

Dr. Ḥannā's disquisitions in favour of Arab unity typically reflect the kind of difficulties which an Arab Marxist is bound to face in adhering to the flag of nationalism. In defending national movements a Marxist has a very limited field for manoeuvre. The point has been perhaps best analysed by Christopher Hill:

"The Marxist view," he says, "of national movements is an historically relative one: it holds that the establishment of an independent nation state is a necessary part of the bourgeois revolution and is an essential pre-condition for the winning of democracy. Its economic basis is that 'in order to achieve complete victory for commodity production the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, must have politically united territories with a population speaking the same language'. As against what preceded them, the creation of such 'bourgeois' nations is an historically progress-

---

<sup>1</sup> Vaespura. pp. 261, 17

ive step. 'One cannot be a Marxist,' Lenin wrote in 1915, 'without feeling the deepest respect for the great bourgeois revolutionaries who had an historic right to speak in the name of 'bourgeois fatherlands', who aroused tens of millions of people of new nations to civilized life in their struggle against feudalism'. So long as a national movement would have the effect of freeing a people from foreign oppression, Marxists supported it; thus in the nineteenth century Marx was an advocate both of German and Italian national unity, and of the independence of Poland and Ireland..... Really complete national unity, Lenin held, could only be attained under socialism, since so long as imperialism existed, the motive for exploiting other peoples would remain. But then Lenin held the view that full democracy could only be obtained after the overthrow of capitalism, whose economic exploitation made nonsense of political equality. So in each case - in working for democracy or in working for the independence of small nations - Lenin argued that these 'bourgeois revolutionary' demands were also of the greatest importance for socialists, since in so far as they were achieved imperialism all over the world would be correspondingly sapped and weakened."

One concrete thing which emerges from this quotation is that, for any Marxist - whether socialist or Communist - nationalist movements in underdeveloped countries represent a transitional period in the general history of the human struggle for 'freedom and democracy'; it can only be praised and supported, from a Marxist standpoint, for one of two reasons: a) as one of the factors of the general collapse of imperialism, and b) as a step towards eliminating feudalist divisions and consequently preparing society for the socialist revolution.

Dr. Hanna's views on Arab unity, however, give quite a different

---

<sup>1</sup>Christopher Hill, Lenin and the Russian Revolution, The English Universities Press Ltd. (London), 1957, pp. 136-137, 140, 141.

impression; they seem to be dominated by the assumption that this unity is an ideal in itself.

### Jamāl 'Abd an Nāṣir

We conclude our study of the ideas of modern Arab nationalism with a survey of the opinions of an Arab leader who has come to personify, both in the eyes of Arabs and non-Arabs, the vigour, the devotion and the emotionalism of the new phase of Arab nationalism: Jamāl 'Abd an Nāṣir. To non-Arabs he represents that fresh state of mind, that revived, over-sensitive pride and that self-confidence which has characterised the Arabs after their recovery from the shock of the Palestinian nakbah (disaster) of 1948. To most Arabs, who have avidly searched for a leader for nearly half a century, he is the very man and the idealized image of their best selves.<sup>1</sup>

Nāṣir's earlier life was dominated by a factor which exercised a deep impact on his social and political outlook and which perhaps enabled him to epitomize Arab nationalism. This was the humiliation, which he suffered both as an ordinary individual and as a patriot. Nāṣir was born on January 15, 1918 into a fallāḥī, or peasant, family in Banī Mur (a village near Assiut) as his 'propagandists' assert,<sup>2</sup> or in Alexandria, as a journalist has recently claimed.<sup>3</sup> When his family moved to

---

<sup>1</sup> Aflaq, ma'rakat' al maṣīr al waḥid, pp. 108-109, 151.

<sup>2</sup> Ṭahā 'Abd al Baqī Surūr, Jamāl 'Abd an Nāṣir, rajul ghayyara wajh at tarikh, al maktabat 'al 'ilmiyah, Cairo, 1957, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> Joachim Joesten, Nasser, The Rise to Power, Odhams Press, London, 1962, p. 13. The writer claims to have had a special interview with Nāṣir during which Nāṣir gave him "a lot of information about his earlier life" (p.10.)

Assiut in 1923 they found their baladī ("Provincial") origin a source of great social embarrassment.

"Some idea," writes an American journalist who has had long experience in Egypt, "of the humiliation the family must have suffered at the hand of the Assiut landlords is revealed when you ask members of those great clans if they knew Abdel Nassers in Beni Mer. 'Oh, we knew them all, of course,' is the inevitable answer. 'But we never spoke to such people.'"

In later years Nāṣir's baladī extraction continued to be a major obstacle in his career. As an example, when he wanted to enter the Egyptian Military Academy in 1936, his application was at first rejected both because of his poor background and because of his participation in the anti-royalist demonstrations of 1935.<sup>2</sup> As Nāṣir's political consciousness grew with the years this personal humiliation was further deepened by the greater humiliation which he experienced as a patriot and nationalist. He chafed at the unedifying unity which had been forged between British imperialism and Egyptian feudalism in plundering and oppressing the Egyptian people. Even his years at the Military Academy, which inevitably necessitated his aloofness from all political agitation, were marked by occasional humiliation under British and other non-Egyptian commanders.<sup>3</sup> The war years inflicted still greater injuries on his nationalist pride.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wilton Wynn, Nasser of Egypt, The Search for Dignity, Arlington Books, Cambridge, 1959, pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> Georges Vaucher, Gamal Abdul Nasser et son Équipe, sub-title: Les années d'humiliation et la conquête du pouvoir, Julliard, Paris, 1959, p.88.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 107 et seq.

Perhaps worst of all was the British ultimatum to King Fārūq on February 4, 1942 to instruct Nahas Pasha to form a cabinet, and the British subsequent occupation of the 'Abdīn Palace which resulted in the King's submission. Most army officers were deeply shamed by this event. It was this same year that saw the organization of a secret revolutionary society, already created in 1939, 'dedicated to the task of liberation', to be later known as dubāt 'al ahrār (Free Officers).<sup>1</sup> Palestine offered a battlefield where young Egypt could vindicate her honour. The Free Officers took a most active part in the hostilities. Nāṣir drew up a secret plan whereby certain air force units would take action and thus commit the entire Egyptian army to war against Israel.<sup>2</sup> But the Palestine war turned out to be one of the saddest, most frustrating chapters of modern Arab nationalism. The coup d'etat of July 1952 was therefore nothing but the inevitable reaction of an injured pride against a succession of national humiliations for which the West was held to be mainly responsible. "The British," Nāṣir never tired of saying, "are at the root of all our troubles."<sup>3</sup>

Against this background we now try to present an appreciation of Nāṣir's thoughts under three headings: (I) Nāṣir as a political thinker, (II) Nāṣir and Islam, (III) Nāṣir and Arab unity.

---

<sup>1</sup>Sadat, op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Wynn, op.cit., pp. 33-34.

<sup>3</sup>Vaucher, op.cit., p. 108.

## I. Nāṣir as a political thinker.

A common feature of all the leaders of the Free Officers seems to be their aversion to abstract and doctrinaire politics. "I have always," says Anwar as Sādāt, one of the prominent figures of the Free Officers, "mistrusted theories and purely rational systems. I believe in the power of concrete facts, and the realities of history and experience. My political ideas grow out of my personal experience of oppression, not out of abstract notions; I am a soldier, not a theoretician, and it was by an empirical process that I came to realise my country needed a political system which responded to its essential needs and reflected its true spirit."<sup>1</sup> As has been noted by Vaucher, for Nāṣir and his friends revolution did not represent an historical fact propounded through academic studies and discussions; it was rather a phase in the national life which had to be launched and organized. It was a fact of the future and not of the past.<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that the only book of Nāṣir so far published, with its high-sounding title ḥalsamāt' ath thawrah (The Philosophy of the Revolution), should have been subjected to a sharp, sarcastic remark from his former colleague, General Najīb (Neguib).<sup>3</sup> But, both as the leader of modern Arab nationalism and the President of

---

<sup>1</sup>Revolt on the Nile, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Gamal Abdel Nasser et son Équipe, p. 111.

<sup>3</sup>Egypt's Destiny, p. 215.

Egypt, Nāṣir has had to make a number of speeches and addresses on the various problems facing the Arab peoples. In assessing the views and aspirations expressed through such statements one has to consider them in the context of Nāṣir's general political convictions. In other words, one has to take him, even if for a moment, as a 'political thinker'.

The most important feature of Nāṣir the politico is his consistent refusal to commit himself to any particular school of thought. It would not be fair to ascribe this wholly to opportunism. A more realistic line would be to regard it as the result of his political observations and experiences under the ancien régime. As an 'angry young man' Nāṣir threw himself desperately into one political movement after another, embracing any ideology that might free Egypt of imperialism and feudalism. He successively joined the Muslim Brotherhood, the Wafd, Miṣr al Fatāṭ ("Young Egypt") and the Communist and Socialist parties.<sup>1</sup> None of them, however, succeeded in satisfying his quest for a panacea for Egypt's plight, but all of them served to convince him that he could never be doctrinaire.

Nevertheless, it is not impossible to identify in Nāṣir's statements and speeches the main trends of thought which have contributed to his present political outlook. One can divide these trends into three categories. These are, in order of priority:

---

<sup>1</sup> Vaucher, op.cit., p. 67 et seq., p. 71.



- a) Egyptian patriotism. Two leaders of this trend have especially enjoyed Nāṣir's respect. One is Muṣṭafā Kāmil,<sup>1</sup> of whom we have already spoken at length.<sup>2</sup> The other is Tawfīq al Ḥakīm, whose emphasis on the Pharaonic origins of the Egyptians has also been referred to.<sup>3</sup> Ḥakīm's 'awdat' ar rūḥ (Cairo 1933) has a unique place among Nāṣir's favourite books, perhaps because of the curious resemblance of its main hero, Muḥsin, to Nāṣir.<sup>4</sup> It was no doubt in recognition of his high esteem for Ḥakīm that, in 1955, Nāṣir decided, over the head of the Egyptian Ministry of Education, to appoint him to the Supreme Council of Arts and Letters.
- b) Islamic revivalism. Kawākibī's 'tabā'ī' al istibād<sup>5</sup> and scattered works of Afghānī and 'Abduḥ<sup>6</sup> have served to form the basis of Nāṣir's belief in Islam as a political force in achieving Arab unity.
- c) European radicalism. The spiritual leaders of the French Revolution, and especially Rousseau and Voltaire, should be mentioned under

---

<sup>1</sup>Vaucher, op.cit., pp. 50, 72-73, 73, 87, 100.

<sup>2</sup>V. supra. p. 132.

<sup>3</sup>V. supra. p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>Vaucher, op.cit., p. 56 et seq.

<sup>5</sup>V. supra. p. 104 et seq.

<sup>6</sup>Vaucher, op.cit., p. 51.

this heading. His interest in these two thinkers dates back to his days at the Secondary School nahdat' al misriyah. He wrote an article entitled Voltaire, The Man of Freedom in the school magazine.<sup>1</sup> But his special admiration was reserved for Napoleon. Three features in Napoleon's personality must have fired Nāṣir's imagination; the Corsican's hostility against the British, his humble beginnings and his administrative genius as manifested in Code Napoleon.<sup>2</sup>

---

Nāṣir has tried to rationalize his aversion to doctrinaire disputes through his "Unionist" theory, that is, through his appeal to all classes of the Egyptian people to join hands, irrespective of their conflicting interests, in a single front - or, to use his term, in the National Union ittiḥād al qaṣmī. He thus refutes the inevitability of the class struggle. In an important interview with the editor of al aḥrām which was devoted to expounding his political views (the only statement of its kind available to the present author) he likened, in broad terms, this unity and co-operation to the peaceful co-existence in the international scene. "If we," he said, "appeal for peaceful co-existence in the world, why should we not appeal for it in our own country. The National Union

---

<sup>1</sup>Vaucher, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

is a manifestation of peaceful co-existence between classes."

Nāṣir conceives this unity and co-existence not as an "armistice" in the class struggle, but as a stable, permanent status designed to promote justice, freedom and peace. He rebukes the Communists who, although supporting the idea of peaceful co-existence in international relations, reject the principle of national co-existence and unity on grounds of the inevitability of class war.<sup>1</sup> Nāṣir has supplemented the "unionist theory" with his more elaborate economic blue-prints. At the Co-operative Congress on December 5, 1957, he observed that a happy and prosperous society depended upon the elimination of the exploitation of the majority by a few. In his view the country was "moving to a new phase, a transitional phase", in which the objective was the establishment of a "socialist, democratic and co-operative society, free from political, social and economic exploitation". While he was determined to eliminate "opportunist individualism" he did not believe that the alternative was "state capitalism". Instead, he anticipated the state in the role of "trustee" over the people, with protection of the "small capitalists and small savers" as a principal objective.<sup>2</sup>

Nāṣir's views seem valid on paper. But here he is faced with the same problem as Dr. Ḥannā for he does not explain how he is going to re-

---

<sup>1</sup> al ahrām, June 2, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Wheelock, Nasser's New Egypt, Stevens and Sons, London, 1960, p. 69.

concile, on the one hand, his appeal for ending the class war with his call for socialism and how, on the other hand, he can achieve a modus vivendi between the conflicting class interests of the people.

The issue as presented here forms, in fact, one of the most intractable problems facing all serious-minded nationalists in the underdeveloped countries. But it has not been a dilemma confined to the East. In the West, to be sure, the Germans had to face a similar problem only half a century ago when the sudden upsurge of Marxism among the German toiling masses threatened to disrupt national unity. A solution to the problem was suggested by the prominent nationalist of Wilhelmian Germany, Friedrich Naumann, who believed social reform and imperialistic wars to be the most effective means of achieving an alliance between democracy and the Kaiser "in the interest of national security, the imperative of all politics".<sup>1</sup> A trace of Naumann's 'democratic Caesarism' can be discerned in the politics of Nasserism which, while making the most skilled use of Egypt's external problems in rallying the classes of the nation, does not forget the issue of social reforms.<sup>2</sup>

## II Nāṣir and Islam.

Nāṣir's attitude towards Islam is similar to that adopted by Kamīl;<sup>3</sup> that is, it should be subordinated to the requirements of nationalism.

---

<sup>1</sup>William O. Shanhan, "Friedrich Naumann: A German View of Power and Nationalism" in Nationalism and Internationalism, op.cit., p. 383, also pp. 362, 380, 382.

<sup>2</sup>Wheelock, op.cit., p. 277 et seq.

<sup>3</sup>v. supra. p. 144 et seq.

This has given rise to an evident contradiction in Naḡir's personality. While in private life he is a staunch practising Muslim<sup>1</sup> - a fact which must have been decisive in bringing the Free Officers into contact with the Muslim Brotherhood before 1952,<sup>2</sup> in public he has maintained a curiously inconsistent attitude to Islam as a factor in the present movement of the Arabs. It is noteworthy that, in his Philosophy of Revolution, he concedes, but only in a passing remark, the importance of Islam when defending the case for Egyptian leadership in the Arab Islamic world. Egypt, he says, forms the centre of three circles: the Arab circle, the African circle and the Islamic circle.<sup>3</sup> He has also noted, on various occasions, the role of Islam in bringing about the past glory of the Arabs.<sup>4</sup> But, as regards its place both as a guiding principle and as a unifying force among the Arabs of today, he sometimes becomes as reticent as he is on ideological niceties. Whether this is due to an inner, genuine conviction that Islam as it is now does more harm than good to the Arab political struggle, or to a temporary bitterness and annoyance following the Ikhwan's attempt on his life (October 1954) is not quite clear. The point can be brought into greater relief by studying Naḡir's ideas on Arab unity.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ṭāh 'Abd al Baqī, op.cit., pp. 118-119.

<sup>2</sup> Revolt on the Nile, p. 26 et seq., pp. 30, 43 et seq., 61 et seq.  
The Moslem Brethren, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> The Philosophy of the Revolution, Public Affairs Press, Washington, 1955, p. 88 et seq.

### III Nāṣir and Arab Unity.

Nāṣir is among those Arabs who conceive the existence and unity of the Arab umma as the outcome of multiple forces and factors. Because of this, he should evidently be placed in a category which is opposed to Ḥuṣrī's monistic nationalism.

"To me," he says in an article especially written for the American magazine Life, "Arab nationalism means many things. Above all Arab nationalism is a spiritual force, a voluntary solidarity of the Arab peoples everywhere based on a common heritage of language, culture and history. (Note the significant omission of religion.) This is a feeling that comes from the heart; it cannot be imposed. It comes out of the Arab past, but it can also confer great political benefits on the Arabs today. By military solidarity and by voluntary co-operation in economics, culture and foreign policy the Arab nations can grow strong in their own right."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the Arab umma, in the eyes of Nāṣir, is an entity resting on a triangular base of language, culture and history. We find, neither in the above mentioned article nor anywhere else, Nāṣir's own interpretation of each of these factors in a clear and straightforward way. There are, however, some passages in his various and numerous speeches which give us an insight into his conception of the Arab umma.

---

(cont.)

<sup>4</sup>"(The peoples living in our region were united by the power of belief ('aqīdah) when ḥ-alam raised its banners, proclaimed the new divine mission, confirmed the preceding missions and uttered the last word of God appealing to his peoples for justice."  
(Speech at the National Assembly, February 5, 1958, quoted in al jumhūriyat' al 'arabiyyat' al muttahiḍah, dar ma'arif bi miṣr, Cairo, 1958.)  
See also Ṭaha 'Abd al Baqi, op. cit., p. 66 et seq.

<sup>1</sup>Gamal Abdul Nāṣir, "Where I stand and Why?", Life International, 17 August 1959.

Of the three factors enumerated above (language, culture and history) Nāṣir, as a leading champion of a movement seeking unity and solidarity, is naturally most interested in history, which has been his favourite field of study since his youth<sup>1</sup> and which, in his view, is but the story of Arab unity. "The history of unity in the life of our umma is the history of our umma itself."<sup>2</sup> Being a soldier Nāṣir tends often to interpret this history in military terms as the account of a series of exploits and feats achieved by the united Arabs against internal and external enemies. In a lecture delivered from the Chair of the Professor of History at the Egyptian Military Academy addressed to the Academy's graduates on April 26, 1959, he sets himself the task of elaborating his previous statement on the identification of Arab history with Arab unity. Two events in Arab history figure prominently in this lecture. The first was the Arabs' resistance to the Crusaders in the eleventh century and the second, the Egypto-Syrian joint resistance to the Tartars' invasion of the thirteenth century. Here again we do not find any reference to Islam. Even the Arabs' heroism and sacrifices in the Crusades are viewed by him in an irreligious light:

"The appeal of Arab nationalism has been predominant and its banner held aloft since the tenth century, because the Arab umma, when it was subjected to the invasion (of the Crusaders) and placed in jeopardy, realised that it was only by adhering to the appeal of Arab nationalism

---

<sup>1</sup>Vaucher, op.cit., p. 59. Ṭahā 'Abd al Bāqī, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>al jumhūriyat' al muttabīdat' al 'arabīyah, p. 20.

that the Arabs could secure their survival and preserve their traditions and territory."<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, Nāṣir does not regard Arab nationalism as merely consisting of mottoes and slogans adopted according to the exigencies of changing circumstances. In fact, he has more than once referred to it as a "comprehensive social philosophy and opinion": "For the first time on one of its battlefields, Communism has faced a comprehensive social philosophy and opinion, 'aqīdah wa falsafah ijtima'iyah kāmīlah."<sup>2</sup> This statement gives rise to the expectation that Nāṣirite nationalism should consist of a whole range of social, political and economic principles representing either the application of the old Islamic ideals to new conditions, or the combination of the traditional traits of Islamic thought and relevant teachings from the Western civilization. As mentioned above, we find no explanation by Nāṣir himself of the nature of these principles. For these reasons the Nāṣirite definition of the Arab umma and its aims, and especially of the actual function of the forces which go into the making of the umma, is far from being comprehensive.

But matters do not end there. Vagueness and reticence may be helpful when the battle is being waged in the diplomatic field, where attachment to concrete principles and doctrine prove to be serious impedi-

---

<sup>1</sup> al ahrām, April 26, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., April 30, 1959.



ments to free manoeuvre and slick improvisation, but when the conflict spreads to the realm of ideas, these qualities can hardly be beneficial. It is indeed in the latter case that the shortcomings are laid bare and inner beliefs, hitherto unexpressed for the sake of expediency, are exposed in the heat of the moment. This was exactly what happened at the time of the first real conflict between Communism and Arab nationalism in the spring of 1959. It is irrelevant in this discussion to analyse the causes of that resounding clash but the event was of great importance for the Arabs since, perhaps to the surprise of observers on all sides, it proved to be an ideological challenge to Arab nationalism. This was quite understandable. In standing up to the Western onslaught the Arabs have had to face a mainly material and economic offensive. Even the Western intellectual and cultural invasion of the Arab world, overwhelming and far-reaching as it may have been, cannot be regarded as an ideological challenge because of its variegated nature, multiplicity of sources and division of aims. French, British and American modes of thought and judgment, as introduced to the Arab countries through various direct and indirect means, do not represent a clear-cut and premeditated set of thoughts and ideas, capable of being called "ideology". This has enabled the Arab apologists to keep their temper in certain fields and to counter the attacks by adopting tactics and borrowing ideas from Western liberalism in their fight against the diehard Imperialists. Sometimes they have been able to face the challenge of one Western country by resorting to the teachings of another Western country. We have already

considered how Ḥuḡrī repudiates the French school of nationalism, to give one example, which in his view contradicts the basic principles of Arab nationalism, by invoking the aid of German thinkers.

The Communist onslaught is, by contrast, strikingly ideological. It stands for a distinct and definite way of living and thinking. Contrary to its Western counterpart, it is coherent, consistent and centralized; it is set in motion by a single force and pursues established aims. For these reasons it is a far more formidable force to resist, and thus its clash with Arab nationalism in the spring of 1959 caused a consequentially deeper heart-searching. Although occasioned by purely political causes the clash touched the very heart and kernel of what were thought to be the traditions and aims of Arab nationalism. Representing a spiritual and mental onslaught far more vehement and vigorous than the Western challenge, it had to be faced with a greater vigilance and a more effective weapon. The vigilance which was immediately displayed was indeed commendable. In March and April 1959, throughout the Arab nationalist world, mammoth demonstrations were staged against Communism, all vying in bitterness and enthusiasm with those held against Western colonialism. Memories of the misdeeds and crimes of the Communist states, either against their own nationals or against their weaker neighbours, glossed over at the time of commitment for reasons of policy, were resuscitated by Arab orators and columnists to remind the baffled Arab populace of the lack of difference between the "black" and "red" Imperialists.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>See, inter alia, al aḥrām's accounts of the Ukrainians' anti-government demonstrations (21 March 1959), Tibet's revolution against China (27 March 1959) and the Soviet aggressiveness towards Japan (April 30, 1959).

As for the choice of ideological weapons to counter the Communist offensive, the matter was not so simple. If there were ever a real opportunity to test the strength of the Nasirite interpretation of the philosophy of Arab nationalism it was certainly this first battle with a well-defined alien ideology. So far as could be seen no such interpretations and elaboration of principles took place. But what did take place was a rush by Nāṣir and his followers to seek refuge with Islam, in spite of the leader's reticence on the importance of Islam. The "comprehensive opinion and philosophy" transpired to be nothing other than the Islamic precepts. One is almost surprised at the religious terminology used by Nāṣir at this time to vindicate Arab nationalism and denounce its opponents. In a speech addressed to tens of thousands of demonstrators in Damascus after they had uttered their Friday prayers in the Umawī Mosque he announced: "We reject the principles which represent servility and heresy, ilḥād". At the beginning of his speech he praised God who "has united the hearts of this nation to protect its religion". In the same speech he defined the internal opponents of Arab nationalism, in this case the Communists, as "the outsiders" or khawārij, a term applied to a 'deviationist' sect of Islam.<sup>1</sup> "We praise God ... who has armed this

---

<sup>1</sup>The name of khawārij (or Kharijites) was originally given to the troops who deserted 'Alī, the Prophet's son-in-law, during his dispute with Mu'awīyah; Thenceforward it was applied to those who adopted an extremist and fanatical attitude in regard to the duty of every Muslim "to exhort men to do good and restrain them from doing evil". The khawārij regarded this as an "absolute duty to be pursued in season and out of season, even at the cost of life itself". (H.A.R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, Oxford University Press, London, 1949, p. 120.)

nation with vigilance (or consciousness (wa'iy)) to rout the conspirators and the khawārij." <sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, fears of an outright identification of Arab nationalism with Islam seems to have restrained Nāṣir from being too emphatic on the religious theme. His language in this respect sounds far milder and more timorous than that of his immediate followers and assistants, who were thought to be more suitable agents for revising the religious zeal of the people and exposing the atheistic principles of Communism while showing the compatibility of Islam with the progressive aims of Arab nationalism. This is shown by statements and speeches made by General 'Amir, the United Arab Republic Minister of War and Anwar as Sādāt, the Secretary of the National Union, ittihād al qawmī, the only political party in Egypt. In a speech delivered at a special memorial service for the Iraqi "martyrs of Arab nationalism" at the celebrated University of Al Azhar (Cairo) Sādāt praised Islam as a "noble revolution" engineered fourteen centuries ago by Muḥammad to secure human dignity and "to give Man his (due) place". It represented not one, but numerous revolutions. Having propounded the egalitarian teachings of Islam and its contribution to the liberation of the human mind and soul, Sādāt reminded his audience that the strength and prestige of the Muslims fourteen centuries ago was due to the fact that "they were holding on to their religion". He then denounced Imperialism as the first invader of

---

<sup>1</sup> al ahrām, March 21, 1959.

the Islamic world. Imperialism realized that it could never dominate the Islamic countries as long as these clung to their beliefs. Thus it set out to sow scepticism and doubts of their religion in the hearts of the Muslims.

"The battle," continued Sādāt, "which started a century ago is still continuing in Asia, Africa and many other places. Imperialists fight us by insulting our beliefs and by sowing doubts in our minds about our creed and our principles."

Having thus associated imperialism with anti-Islamic forces and thoughts, Sādāt explained the situation of Islam as regards democracy, capitalism and communism. He maintained that Islam contains all the useful elements of these schools of thought and solves all material and spiritual problems. Sādāt stated that the real battle today is between materialism and spiritualism and that Islam has found the right solution to reconcile the matter with the spirit by regulating both of them in a way that neither can dominate the other. His concluding sentence is a blunt appeal to the Arab nationalists to adhere to Islamic principles:

"Amidst all these developments, amidst this battle, the solution lies with us, the Muslims. It is extremely simple: to return to our revolution which was launched fourteen centuries ago by our Prophet, Muḥammad, and to reflect on its scientific, ethical, social and spiritual instructions."<sup>1</sup>

One should only compare the above perorations with Sādāt's explicit plea for separation of 'church' and state in his Revolt on the

---

<sup>1</sup> al aḥrām, 30 April 1959.

Nile<sup>1</sup> in order to appreciate the compelling need which the Egyptian leaders felt in the face of the Communist challenge to have recourse to the religious sentiments of the Arabs.

The Arab-Communist clash of 1959 proved that Naṣir's "philosophy" of nationalism is, in effect, an undeclared combination of the Islamic precepts with the day-to-day political exigencies of the Arab nationalist movement. It also disclosed Naṣir's inner conviction that Islam, more than any other factor, is still the main force capable of securing, and consolidating, the spiritual unity of all Arabs.

### Conclusions

"In former times," says H.G.Wells, "ideas trickled; in our times they jet".<sup>2</sup> This sentence can well be used in describing the present relationship between Arab nationalism and Western civilization. Whereas, in the nineteenth century, Western ideas merely trickled into the Arab world, today they submerge it in a sustained, torrential sweep. But a curious irony can instantly be observed here. In the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century Westernization in the Arab world was on a small scale and nevertheless found such staunch champions as Ṭaḥṭawī, Shumayil, Ṭahā Husain and others. /<sup>Today</sup> Westernization, although embracing the whole range of Arab life, can hardly claim such eminent

---

<sup>1</sup> Especially those parts of the book in which Ṣadāt tries to justify Naṣir's suppression of the Muslim Brethren. (See Revolt on the Nile, pp. 68, 80.)

<sup>2</sup>The World of William Clissold, New York, 1926, I, 59, 212.

adherents among the Arabs. In other words, the deeper the ideas of Western civilization have penetrated into the Arab world the more anti-Western the Arabs have become. This has been most evident among the intelligentsia. Drawing on the results of an illuminating sample survey carried out in Egypt and three other Arab countries, Daniel Lerner has expressed the Arab-West paradox in these terms:

"The keynote among the professionals was extreme ambivalence, an unruly co-existence of love and hatred towards the British. Oriented towards the West by their education, whence they have derived their conceptions of the good society, they suffer from a sense of rejection by the West. Many feel driven, in self-defence, to turn their rage against the erstwhile object of affection. From high expectations crushed seems to come their sense of extreme deprivation."<sup>1</sup>

But have the Arabs managed to balance this negative feature in their political thought with a positive approach to the problems of their national identity? We try to answer this question in the following pages.

---

Our study has shown that, undoubtedly under the impact of Western political thought, the Arab writers and theorists as a whole now tend to regard nation not as the outcome of one single spiritual or material factor, but as the product of the inter-action of a series of complicated

---

<sup>1</sup>The Passing of Traditional Society, p. 223.

and sometimes unpredictable forces, both spiritual and material. Having awakened to the necessity of placing the expansive mass movements of their countries on definite principles and of steering it through a welter of rival ideologies, they have set about, somewhat belatedly, formulating ideas in order to simplify the tasks before these movements and to counter opposing trends and thoughts. One can discern in all these efforts a sign of nervousness and fluster for which one reason may be the mental distress to which any people in the process of so formidable a struggle is inevitably subjected. But a more important reason is the constant and vigilant watch which is being kept on the Arab peoples by a West invariably ready to carp at them. Feeling that every single move on their part is being closely followed by a cohort of Western critics who indiscriminately apply their own political, social and moral standards of judgment to the acts and thoughts of an alien people, the Arabs have fallen victim to certain defective habits of mind.

Firstly, in the haste to assert the reality of the umma and vindicate its aims and attitudes, most Arab writers run into pathetic contradictions. Haunted by a way of thinking disastrously accustomed to simplifying and dissecting facts and thus missing the intricate relations between the component parts of each phenomenon, willing to emphasise the major composing elements of the Arab umma such as language or religion and, at the same time, anxious to imbibe the doctrines and teachings of Western liberalism, their thoughts are afflicted by inconsistency and sometimes anarchy. It is noticeable that, so far, no Arab writer of a



considerable intellectual calibre and adequate international repute has helped to resolve this contradiction by effecting a critical study of the West's spiritual impact on the Arabs. Such a critical study is necessary in order to sift this impact - to commend certain doctrines and ideas as congenial to the Arab mind and to reject the others as the offspring of the special social and political conditions in the West. This is especially essential in the political field. The progressive Arab writers and intellectuals have so far been in the habit of avidly absorbing and lavishly launching the principles of Western democracy. On the other hand, most of them, including those Arab leaders who cannot possibly be branded as reactionaries and mukhadrams (old-fashioned politicians), after disappointing years of practical contact with the masses and the agonizing experiences of ruling them, have come to a different conclusion - that Western democracy, or at least its institutional forms, are not adaptable to the requirements of the Arab people. Whether this non-adaptability is due to the innate and basic characteristics of the Arabs and therefore permanent or whether it is due to certain shortcomings and defects in the social structure of the Arab countries and therefore not transitory, is not yet quite clear. Hence the hesitations and doubts which have invaded the political mind in the Arab world and have given rise to contradictions. In addition to this, the Arabs are not certain which tenets and principles from their vast heritage of the Arab-Islamic civilizations are apposite to the conditions of our time.

Secondly, the Arabs blissfully overlook some of the obstacles which stand in the way of their unity and progress. One wonders whether "over-

look" is the right word, for the Arab state of mind sometimes is even unaware of these obstacles. It is not just a proverbial matter of not washing dirty linen in public. More seriously, it is a question of not knowing that there is any dirty linen in the house at all. Otherwise, there is no reason why there <sup>should be</sup> ~~is~~ no overall analysis of these obstacles, not only in the "propaganda" aimed at impressing the outsiders and on-lookers in the world, but also in the serious literature which is addressed to the Arab masses and especially to the elite. There are hints and references here and there all indicating, if nothing else, the enormous ability of their authors in minimising Arab problems. By obstacles in this context we mean a wide range of spiritual and material factors resulting in the division of the Arabs on a number of levels. An outstanding example of such factors is the divergence in the political, economic and social conditions of the Arab countries which figures so rarely and insignificantly in modern Arab literature. It is high time that a full and realistic assessment was made by Arab writers themselves, of these divergencies as part of the effort to make Arab nationalism a more self-conscious and a less timid movement. It is not this assessment or any similar attempt at revealing the lacunæ, but rather the abstention - or, according to a more charitable interpretation - the inability to face the facts at a fairly close range, which is liable to undermine Arab solidarity in the face of the common enemy. The Arab masses, no less than impartial and uninstructed foreign observers, are often baffled by the acrimonious exchanges between their leaders, who all avowedly pursue the same aims, ||

are actuated by the same desires and fight against the same enemies. They are nonplussed by the fact that, although various tribal and regional prejudices have now given way to the sweeping movement of Arab unity, although many families, dynasties and governments openly soliciting foreign assistance against internal advocates of unity have been superseded by nationalists, the pattern of division in the Arab world has remained almost unchanged. A decade ago monarchical Egypt was suspected, in Arab eyes, of harbouring aggressive intentions towards fraternal countries. Today she remains subject to much the same suspicion, although in lieu of a corrupt and reactionary monarchy now stands a progressive and devoted Republic. The same anathemas and abuses which were hurled by neutral Egypt against the monarchical pro-West Iraq not long ago were being used until quite recently by the same Egypt against a republican and neutral Iraq. Būrqībah, the hero of Tunisia's struggle for independence against France, is as much subjected to charges of betraying Arab unity as King Husain, 'the champion of the Western cause' in the Arab world. Consternation at these developments reveals ignorance of those psychological, social and economic differences which today divide the Arabs from one another. The fact that some or most of these differences are artificial does not at all exonerate the Arab writers from not explaining them.

It is true that the Arabs' timidity in exploring the deeper causes of their political squabbings is only a reaction against the exaggerated pictures which some Western writers, and especially journalists, have been

trying to make of the differences in the Arab world. These writers have always emphasized<sup>1</sup> the factors which tear the Arabs apart, rather than those which can contribute to their eventual unification. Some of them seem even to believe in no real common features in the lives of the Arab-speaking peoples to warrant the notion of Arabism and to justify the efforts for Arab unity. Extremism breeds extremism and the wholesale negation by Western writers of Arabism provokes the Arab nationalists' refusal to concede any discrepancy between the Arabs or any imperfection in their words and deeds.

These are, then, the two main flaws of Arab nationalism in its present theoretical and practical aspects: (a) the contradictory nature of the arguments put forward by some of the Arab leading political analysts and (b) the failure on the part of the majority of them to concede the significant differences in the social, political and economic conditions of the Arab peoples.

To a certain extent these flaws can be traced to the hostile, disparaging attitude of the West, but to a greater extent they should be put down to that characteristic of Oriental history which has contravened the Western pattern of social evolutions. The emergence of European nationalism was preceded by a technical revolution which, after occasioning the rise of economic units, prepared the stage for social changes. The history of European nationalism is marked by a steady progress from "the

---

<sup>1</sup> See, inter alia, John Connell, The Most Important Country, Cassell & Company Ltd., London, 1957.

most concrete to the most ideal, from force to justice". With the Orient the case has been quite the reverse. Oriental nationalism started with a demand for justice as a prerequisite to industrial and technological development. One could almost say of Oriental nationalism what Marx remarked about the philosophy of Hegel: you have to turn it upside-down, because it walks on its head.<sup>1</sup>

None of these explanations, however, absolve the Arabs from blame, for failing to correct these faults and to prevent them from corroding the national mind. In our individual and social existence our reactions to unexpected foreign stimuli may be physically or mentally harmful. Once we understand the nature of these stimuli and are able to a certain extent to predict their recurrence, we can control our reactions, or at least, whittle down their vigour and intensity. Ignorance, on the other hand, of the cause of reactions undoubtedly fortifies and makes them part of one's second nature. Men constantly become frightened by the outbreak of a disease, however frequently it may occur, until they gain knowledge of its nature and causes. Fear, if continuing unchecked, may become a permanent characteristic of the frightened, giving rise to cowardice.

The contradictions and inadequacies in the Arabs' statement of their case for unity, as well as their timidity and refusal to face facts, are excusable only for a limited period as responses to specific external

---

<sup>1</sup>Jacques Berque, op.cit., p. 90.

causes. The intensified military onslaught of the West on the Arab countries during and after the First World War, represented by the French occupation of Syria and the British highhanded policies towards Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Iraq, shocked the Arab nationalists and prompted them to forge a united front towards the Western invaders. Coupled with that shock was a deep sense of helplessness in the face of the West's overwhelming cultural and spiritual challenge. That shock and this helplessness together left their inevitable marks on Arab political thought, which was compelled to concentrate itself rather on the merits and assets of Arab nationalism than on the cleavages and memories of past setbacks. The occasion, of course, should have caused, as it did cause among the more far-sighted Arab thinkers, serious heart-searchings over the whole structure of Arab civilization in its present phase. It should also have created a strong incentive to effect a far-reaching and imaginative revision of some of the principles of this civilization. But, on the whole, the emphasis on the positive aspects of the movement for unity and the minimization, nay ignorance, of the obstacles seemed justified in the light of circumstances.

Then came the Second World War and the ensuing creation of the Israeli State. No event in history has made the Arabs feel so desperately weak, so treacherously let down and so profoundly humiliated as did the Palestinian nakbah of 1948. That episode not only threw a lurid light on the corruption and selfishness of some of the Arab rulers and the disabilities of their subjects, but also showed how far from unity were the

Arab peoples. The revolutionaries and reformists, outraged by the new scandal and feeling the necessity for outspokenness, could not go very far in uncovering the real causes of the Arabs' failure lest they should boost the spirit of Israel; and this has remained, ever since, one of the main factors blunting the self-critical powers of the Arabs.

The situation underwent radical changes after Egypt's coup d'etat of July 1952. So far as the mental state of the Arab peoples is concerned that Revolution represented an antidote to the Palestinian nakbah. A revolutionary and devoted group had overthrown a corrupt regime in the most important and largest of the Arab countries and had taken as one of its battle-cries the urge for Arab unity. Arab pride and self-confidence soared by leaps and bounds as the new Egyptian regime scored resounding successes over forces which, rightly or wrongly, were hitherto considered as the opponents of Arab unity. Egypt's arms deal with Czechoslovakia in June 1955 eliminated that exasperating spirit of loneliness that had prevailed among the Arabs since the Palestinian war. The nationalization of the Suez Canal exalted the Arab spirit a stage further by demonstrating the delicately favourable position which can be enjoyed by the small states in a world held together by the cement of terror. Finally, the failure of the Anglo-French-Israeli expedition to Egypt in November 1956 convinced the Arabs that the period of their international isolation was really and definitely over. Arab pride has been demonstrating itself with growing vigour in every field since these developments. It has been able to afford an intransigent attitude in relation to the West. Egypt, for

instance, refused for a long time, in spite of compelling economic necessities, to restore her diplomatic relations with Great Britain after they were broken off in the wake of the Suez crisis. Iraq most noticeably, but also Syria, adopted an attitude deliberately aimed at humiliating France. The same spirit/<sup>now</sup>prevails in Arab relations with some of the Asian countries such as Pakistan, Persia and even the Chinese People's Republic.

We are thus witnessing a gradual but rapid upsurge of Arab fakhr, which is something more formidable, more overwhelming and more consequential than the familiar Western pride, combined as it is with an oversensitivity unrivalled in the characteristics of other nations. This still emerging pride is buttressed by the overtures to various Arab countries made on the part of both sets of the Great Powers to win them over to their respective camps as part of their efforts to secure victory in the present cold but certainly eventual hot war. The fact that the United States and Britain, spurred on by the realities of the cold war, found themselves compelled to supply arms to Tunisia (November 1957) in defiance of their friendship with France and of NATO solidarity, or that Britain has had to enter into an arms deal with an Iraq by all indications unfriendly to her (May 1959), merely to prevent Soviet intervention cannot fail to pitch the Arab spirit still higher.

All this means that the Arabs have not only recovered from their initial shock and depression, but are in the process of gaining a refreshing sense of self-confidence and security. In such a case one would ex-



pect them to speak more frankly about their faults, setbacks and shortcomings in achieving their unity, just as one would expect a strong man to be able to afford more modesty than <sup>does</sup> a weak one. <sup>can</sup> Those who could excuse the Arabs for having, in the past, turned a blind eye to their deficiencies on the grounds of expediency can no longer approve of and sympathise with their present negligence in this respect. But two factors seem still to be barring the Arabs from a genuine, effective and frank self-criticism. Firstly although they have grown out of their previous feeling of insecurity and immense defencelessness, the habit of under-estimating the obstacles consequent on that feeling of insecurity and defencelessness seems to have eaten into the Arab mind and it may well take some time to eradicate the cause and kill the effects. Secondly, and in this the Arab apologists can well plead mitigating circumstance; although the West's material (i.e. military) pressure on the Arab world has decreased considerably, its spiritual and cultural onslaught has been intensified. The intensification has been not only in the form of an increasing barrage of Western ideas and ways of life but also, as has been frequently emphasised, through the despising and anathematising of Arab thought and traditions. Progressive Arab writers have to face both these factors if they do not want to see their people swathed comfortably in self-complacency and attractive illusion. They can combat the first factor, the spirit of under-estimation, by adopting a bold and frank attitude in evaluating the successes and setbacks of the Arabs in their struggle for unity and glory. They should denounce fiercely the mediaeval theocracy of the Imam of the

Yemen, even if he happens to be an ally in the cause of unity, as they condemn the tactics of pro-West King Husain who does not fully live up to the standards set for an Arab nationalist. They should reveal in clear and convincing terms the political, economic and social differences in the systems of the Arab countries as strongly as they indict the crimes of Western colonialists against their peoples. Finally, they should consistently and unequivocally deprecate any emergence of Arab nu'arah haughtiness, especially towards neighbouring and co-religious countries, any claim to the uniqueness of Arab genius and any intolerance towards inferior or opposing cultures. On the question of Western taunts and reprimands they should adopt a cool but vigilant line. They should never dismiss all Western criticisms of the Arab world by ascribing them to vile and wicked colonialist motives. They should concede the true, and repudiate the unfounded and false of these criticisms through a well-organised campaign shorn of emotionalism. Thus they may well remove a good deal of the misunderstandings and suspicions engendered against the Arabs by prejudiced or ill-informed Western journalists.

## Chapter Four

### RELIGION

Religion, or rather Islam, is the life-blood of the Arab social system. But, with greater force and for reasons which we will try to explain in this chapter, it is the life-blood of Arab nationalism. This is inevitable, especially if we recall that, as was shown in the foregoing pages, the Arabs' adoption of the Western idea of nationhood has landed them in doctrinal inconsistencies and sometimes contradictions. Therefore, Islam is still regarded by many Arab idealists as one of the few factors which would bring all the Arab peoples together in their struggle for unity, as well as in their stand against the West. This is a fact accepted by most of the Arabs, although not admitted by all. The lack of unanimity is due to the evident contradictions between nationalism as an idea and Islam as a world religion and, equally important, to Islam's inability to come to grips with some of the social and political problems typical of our age.

Yet Arab nationalism is today characterised by a growing domination of religion. Considering that, as we pointed out in the previous chapter, modern Arab political thought consists mainly of notions adopted from the West, this growing domination results in still greater contradictions and conflicts in Arab nationalistic thought. The purpose of this chapter is to show the extent to which the domination of Islam over Arab nationalism is a by-product of the Western impact.

---

## Background

We have already seen that the relation between Arabism and Islam has been a moot question ever since the beginning of Islam but notably so since the Muslim peoples embarked on their movement for freedom and progress towards the end of the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century.

We saw in Chapter Two that the leaders of Islamic revivalism did not maintain a uniform position towards the idea of Arab unity. While Afghānī appealed for a comprehensive Muslim unity superseding all confessional and ethnical differences, Riḡā, especially towards the end of his career, took an active part in the Arab nationalist movement and Kawākibī took up and maintained a position halfway between Afghānī and Riḡā.<sup>1</sup>

The situation was different after the First World War when Arab nationalism became a dominant force in the Muslim world. The initial reaction of Arab/Muslim thinkers to Arab nationalism was outright condemnation. To Muslim orthodoxy, Arabism, like Pharaonism, was against the spirit of Islam. The Rector of the Azhar University, Muḥammad Abul Faḍl al Jizārī, and the Mufti, 'Abd ar Raḥmān Qurrah, led the attack on the nationalist heresy. In 1928 they declared that nationality existed only on the basis of religion and that Islam regarded all "the believers" as brothers, thus uniting Arabs and non-Arabs. In 1932 another leading

---

<sup>1</sup>V. supra, pp. 123-128.

religious figure, Shaikh Muḥammad al Ghunaimī at Taftāzānī, stressed the hostility of Islam to all ethnical particularism or iqlimiyah. Later, in 1938, the new Rector of the Azhar University, Shaikh Muḥafā al Marāghī, pointed out the hostility of religion to racialism and called upon the 'ulamā' and Muslims in general to strive "for Islamic unity, without occupying themselves with Arab unity".<sup>1</sup>

Denunciation of nationalism was not confined to the orthodoxy. It was also voiced, as stated in Chapter Two, by such a prominent reformist as 'Abd ar Rāziq in his Islām wa uṣūl al ḥukm.<sup>2</sup>

#### Welcome for Arab Nationalism

With the recrudescence of Arab nationalism after the Second World War we observe a radical change in the attitude of Arab/Muslim thinkers towards Arab nationalism. Notwithstanding their previous condemnations the religious circles in the Arab World, <sup>the religious leaders</sup> threw the whole of their weight behind the idea of Arab unity. This apparent change of heart was necessitated by two factors apart from "the Jewish menace":

First, the apprehension that the new phase of Arab awakening might eventually lead, at the best, to the emergence of laicism in the structure of Arab states as in the case of the Turks or, at the worst, to the domination of "Communist atheism". Second, the age-old problem

---

<sup>1</sup>Marcel Colombe, l'Évolution de l'Égypte, 1924-1950, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1951, pp. 171-172.

<sup>2</sup>v. supra, p. 127.

of Islam's diminishing prestige with the rising generations of progressive and Westernized youth, from whose ranks new rulers often rise, whose main characteristic is a readiness to identify Arab backwardness with attachment to Islam and, in general, to regard religion as an ally of reaction. With a mounting urgency, this problem made it absolutely essential for the Arab/Muslim leaders to give their fullest support to the policies of ruling nationalists, however, un-Islamic they might be. In both directions the task of these leaders was made considerably easier by historical association in the minds of both the faithful and the sceptic between Arab grandeur and the establishment of orthodox Islam on the one hand and by the need of officialdom to solicit the assistance of the clergy in times of distress on the other. Whatever their motives the efforts of leading Muslim 'ulama' in this period had a clear aim which was to put an Islamic construction on all the ideals of Arab nationalism and to point a manifestly religious nature to the struggle of Arabs for independence and progress.

The Azhar University in Cairo and especially its monthly review majallat 'al azhar are today the most reliable and most significant sources of organised Muslim opinion within the Arab world and, therefore, deserve our earnest consideration. In view of the purpose of the present chapter we shall concern ourselves here with the issues of the review from the beginning of 1952 to the end of 1958 and attempt to elucidate the views of the most prominent representatives of Modern Islamic thought on various problems of Arab political life, mainly in the light of Arab-

West relations.

Viewed in the context of majallah's<sup>1</sup> history since it was created in 1930 two major changes can be observed in its attitude during this period - the growing tendency to take an interest in, and express opinions on, important issues of Arab politics and, as the corollary to this, the shifting of emphasis from the problems and interests of Muslims in general to those of the Muslim Arabs in particular. Both changes are evidenced by the appearance in the majallah of an increasing number of articles and essays on a wide range of political and social problems facing the Arabs in general and the Egyptians in particular. Both changes reveal impressive contradictions as regards Arab nationalism which have also beset the minds of Arab religious circles.

---

<sup>1</sup>The aim of majallat 'al azhar (henceforward referred to as majallah) as can be understood from most of its annual forewords, before and after this period, have been threefold: (a) to serve Islam; (b) to serve the cause of Islam in general by attacking the materialistic philosophy and, (c) to serve the Islamic community, which constitutes the social aspect of the journal's activities. Thus far, the journal's three successive editors have conceived these aims in different lights, each adopting a different attitude according to his own interpretation of the situation of Islam as an entity. As Professor Smith puts it: "For the first editor Islam was a transcendent idea, which it is man's duty to ascertain and follow. For the second (Wajdi) it comes close to being an historical phenomenon which it is man's duty to defend. For Wajdi makes clear his conception of the service that Islam today requires. It is defence." (W. G. Smith, Islam in History, p. 134). We might say that, for the present editors, Islam represents a mainly social and political system, which can provide a progressive and revolutionary regime with all the necessary weapons to reform the society. Its main characteristic, as will be presently seen, is anti-Westernism.

The Egyptian Revolution of July 1952 was given an enthusiastic welcome by majallah, which hastened to voice hopes of the ascendancy of Islamic tenets under the new order and took the opportunity to denounce the "ignorant, jāhili, and corrupt regime" of the previous rulers. It is noteworthy that one of the grounds on which Muhibbād Dīn al Khaṭīb, the editor-in-chief of majallah, in his editorial of October 1952 attacked the former regime was its attempt at isolating the Islamic church from social and political life.

"That regime (Fārūq's) was trying, with its own methods of lenience and souplesse, to confine Islam to the mosque, so that its principles and traditions do not extend to the social fields, to the popular institutions and to the cultural centres...."<sup>1</sup>

The remark was significant, indicative as it was of the Azharites' determination to assert the position of the orthodox of the umma's life.

In fact it could be regarded as a warning to the revolutionary officers against any attempt at secularising the administration and holding its religious activities in check. Muhibbād Khaṭīb also found the Revolution an incentive to renewed and intensified efforts on the part of the religious leaders to diffuse Islamic principles among the masses:

"God has now blessed humanity with this great revolution, which has taken place within our sight and hearing during the last three months, uniting as it has the Heirs of the Prophets in their stand on the mission of Islam. The revolution has thus refuted all the excuses to which some of the 'ulama' resorted to in justification of their attitude

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, 20 October 1952, Cairo, p. 138.



on the implementation of the Islamic mission, whenever their conscience reminded them of the obligations with which God has entrusted them."

One reason for this exaltation of the Revolution should be sought in the general decline of religious and moral standards under the order now defunct and especially in the increasing isolation of Al Azhar from social developments. The revolution, with its proclaimed aim of arresting the downward course of Egypt towards social and moral collapse, thus could not fail to rouse hopes among the men of Al Azhar for a resuscitation of religious life in their country. This is admitted unequivocally in an article by Muḥammad 'Abdul Latīf as Subkī, Member of the Body of Senior 'ulamā', in which, after condemning Islam's degradation before the Revolution he says that recently things had come to such a pass that Al Azhar had become "something of an intruder among a people alien to it". The writer then hails "the followers in the footsteps" of 'Umar and 'Amr ibn al-'Ās, namely General Najīb and his friends, for having "overthrown the government of corruption, injustice and heresy, and for having revived the honour of the country, the sanctity of religion and the splendence of the nation". The occasion was one not only for saving Egypt from moral decline, but also a time for restoring Islam to its proper place in the world. Realizing that the new regime, in its drive against feudalism and corruption in the country, would be in dire need of moral and spiritual support and that - at least for the moment - this support could only come from religious circles, the Azharites gained an almost unprecedented sense of self-confidence, appealing for a greater

share in the political structure of the new order.

This is the main and recurrent theme of many of the articles during a considerable period after the Revolution - a theme which, in spite of all its defects, has at least permeated the majallah with a commendable spirit of consistency and harmony. 'Abd as Salām al Qabā'ī, Professor of the Faculty of sharī'ah, for instance, in an article entitled "Islam and Its Contribution to the Edifice of World Peace", calls upon Al Azhar to assume the Islamic task of eliminating differences between classes and peoples "in the new era, under the Revolutionary Government", in a bid to maintain world peace.

"This is an opportunity," says the writer, "which will never again be available to Islam. The venerable al Azhar should take advantage of this (opportunity) ... Gone are the days, in which whenever Muslims spoke, they were called 'the prejudiced ones'. An era has come in which world statesmen will ask for our assistance to repel the infidel Communists."<sup>1</sup>

But most interesting of all was the Azharites' attitude towards Najīb's drive for land reform. In order to appraise this attitude in its right perspective we have to go back a little and review a special incident which is revealing of the position of Muslim orthodoxy under Fārūq's regime.

In 1948 the Muslim Brethren produced a circular on the question of wealth in which the leader of the Brethren, Shaikh Hasan al Bannā' de-

---

<sup>1</sup>majallah, October 1952, p. 224.

clared that wealth should not be monopolised by one class, as this is contrary to the laws of Islam, and that it is the duty of the government to distribute agricultural lands in accordance with prophetic traditions. Bannā' drew the conclusion that no land should be hired or rented and that private ownership should be limited to the extent of that land which the owner himself is able to cultivate, "over and above that, he should allot to the landless". Bannā' claimed that Islam opposes the system of capitalist feudalism, which permits the absolute ownership of land, just as it is, against atheistic Communism, where the state owns all the land. He proposed a solution that is midway between Capitalism and Communism in that the individual should own as much land as he can cultivate and that the residue should be given to the landless, free of charge.<sup>1</sup>

This claim by Hasan al Bannā' was strongly rejected by Shaikh Hasanain Muhammad Makhlūf, the Mufti of Egypt who, in a special fatwā (legal decision) quoted extensively from the Koran and the traditions in support of the existing capitalistic system and, in particular, the practices of land tenure. He maintained that no Muslim could be asked to give up his property to anyone else, or be satisfied with only a sufficient quantity to provide him with his daily bread. The Mufti terminated his findings with the admission that the poor classes were in need of decisive treatment, but he was of the opinion that there was no

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. The Muslim Brethren, pp. 41, 57, 146.

remedy except to follow the teachings of Islam with regard to financial and social matters, the elucidation of which is another matter and God knows best (Allāh a 'lam).<sup>1</sup>

The approach held by Al Azhar with regard to the land reform programme of the Najīb government was the very opposite of Shaikh Makhlūf's conclusions. Thus, in an article entitled "Limitation of Ownership in Islam" (tahdīd al milkīyah fi'l islām), Muḥammad 'Arafah, Member of the Body of Senior 'ulama', sets himself the task of providing examples of Islam's limitations in the practice of land tenure. He starts by citing a letter from the Caliph 'Umar addressed to his general, Sa'd abī Waqqāṣ, on the day of the Arab Conquest of Iraq, in which Waqqāṣ is instructed not to allow the concentration (takaddus) of conquered lands in the hands of the Arab invaders, but to leave them to their tillers who would be asked to pay land-tax (jizyah) to the Muslims.<sup>2</sup> This decision was evidently contrary to the Prophet Muḥammad's famous ruling at Khaibar to divide conquered lands into five parts, of which one part should go to "God, the Prophet and the poor", and the remaining four-fifths to "the warriors" (mugātilah). But 'Umar contravened this ruling on grounds of both expediency and justice, since, had the warriors divided the lands between themselves, the succeeding generation of Muslims, other than the

---

<sup>1</sup>Dunne, Religions and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>majallah, October 1952, p. 142.

warriors' heirs, would have been landless. After demonstrating that the Arabs observed 'Umar's instruction in the other occupied countries, including Egypt, 'Arafah concludes, by implication, that, just as 'Umar wisely set aside the Prophet's Khaibar tradition to secure the long-run interests of Muslims, so the present regime has adopted a programme of land reform which, although being un-Islamic, is most welcome, especially if one takes into account the appalling poverty of the fallāhīn with all its social and political evils.<sup>1</sup>

But this wholehearted support for the revolutionary measures of the new regime did not indicate the adoption of a revolutionary attitude by al Azhar itself with regard to social problems. Far from this, an editorial by Muhibb ad Dīn al Khaṭīb made an unequivocal appeal for Egypt's return to Islam's orthodoxy:

"God has now terminated the age of oppression (or trespassing (ṭughyān)). Egypt, whose Muslims form 92 per cent of the whole of her population, wishes to return to her Islamism, just as she did in the first century of the history of Islamic conquest. The greatest man on earth and the noblest here in history is he who strives for the renovation of that glorious period...."

The patriotic tone of the following sentence, in a journal which is trying to concern itself with the interests of the Muslims of all countries, is especially significant:

"This renaissance of the Golden Age of Egypt's history can or should be brought about by reviving her morality,

---

<sup>1</sup> al-Jallāh, October 1952, p. 145.

justice, simplicity, clemency and affection between all the inhabitants of the homeland (watan), irrespective of their opinions and religions, so that they cooperate with one another, to achieve the highest and finest degree (of progress) attained by the peoples of the earth in sciences, industries, and the means of administering their affairs, ameliorating their services and promoting their development, in order that we get the best of everything and become the most experienced nation in these (fields) ..."<sup>1</sup>

As can be observed the Azharites could not welcome achievements of the new regime without committing themselves to the ideas of Arab nationalism, which was the main battle-cry of the Officers' movement. But, all commitment to nationalism raises the burning issue of its contradiction of the principles of Islam. How do the Azharites resolve this contradiction? Unfortunately, we cannot find in their articles and essays much reference to this matter. This omission makes their works as open to criticism as those of the political and laic theorists of Arab nationalism. But the Azharites can be said to be presenting at least a more enlightened and straightforward concept of the relation between Islam and Arab nationalism by clearly identifying the one with the other. Such a starting-point precludes any question of contradiction. Let us mention a few examples.

In his editorial of the April issue of 1956 under the title "Has the Giant Woken Up?" Khaṭīb depicts the ups and downs of Islam and Arabism in history to prove that they stand and fall together. The Giant

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, February 1953, p. 653.

('imlāq), which is the nation inhabiting the Arabian Peninsula, carried at the time of the Orthodox Caliphs (632-661) the "banner of justice and wisdom" to the three known continents of that time, namely Asia, North Africa and Europe, establishing the existence of Arabism (kiān al 'urūbah) and the humane Islam (al islām al insānī) at the same time.

Islam started to decline, continues Khaṭīb, at the time when its government was Persianized,<sup>1</sup> and when the Giant was benumbed by the "absurdities of Greek philosophy and the imaginings of the Brahmanist Sufism" as well as by many other factors. Consequently, the Giant went to sleep for many

---

<sup>1</sup> It is both regrettable and astonishing to find a great number of majallah's writers suffering from nationalistic prejudices, especially in assessing the contributions rendered by non-Arab Muslims - including Persians - to the growth of Islamic culture and science. Like some of their lay counterparts, this group of Azharites either ignore such contributions or denigrate as a whole the participation of non-Arab Muslims in the construction of Islamic civilization. Here also we can discern a clear manifestation of the precedence which some Azharites accord to their nationalistic emotions at the expense of Islamic universality as well as of indubitable historical facts. It is useful to quote here a paragraph from Ibn Khadūn's muccadimah on the role of non-Arab Muslims in the creation of Islamic history. "It is," writes Ibn Khaldūn, "a remarkable fact that with few exceptions, most Muslim scholars both in the religious and in the intellectual sciences have been 'ajam (Persian). When a scholar is of Arab origin, he is 'ajam in language and upbringing and has 'ajam teachers. This is so in spite of the fact that Islam is an Arabic religion and that its founder was an Arab. The reason for this is that at the beginning Islam had no sciences or crafts. That was due to the simple conditions (that prevailed) and to the desert attitude. The religious laws, which are the commands and prohibitions of God, were in the breast of the authorities... (who) at that time were Arabs. They did not know anything about scientific instruction or the writing of books and systematic works... We have mentioned before that the crafts are cultivated by sedentary peoples and that the Arabs (Bedouins) are of all peoples the least familiar with the crafts. Thus the sciences came to belong to sedentary culture, and the Arabs were not familiar with them or with their cultivation. Now the (only) sedentary people at that time were the 'ajam and, what amounts to

centuries, during which foreigners, from Mongols and Crusaders to Portuguese, Dutch, British and French colonialists, occupied many territories in the eastern and western parts of the Islamic world. "But has the Giant even now woken up? Are we now passing through a new phase in the history of Arabism and Islam, in which we are required by the history of mankind to resume our mission so as to perform on the scene of life another chapter of the history of justice and benevolence?" Khaṭīb believes that the Giant is now in a state midway between sleep and awakening. It has so far recovered from "the benumbing effect of Colonialism in its military and political aspect; but there are still many other sacrifices preventing the Giant from resuming its mission". For many years he had developed the conviction that the Muslims (at this point he does not mention the Arabs separately) were well on the road to salvation, and that their weakness was due to defective leadership. But "less than four years ago", he announces rejoicingly, "the Revolution which broke out in Egypt brought about changes in the machinery of leadership which now manifest themselves daily at home and abroad". Thus he regards the Egyptian Revolution as beneficial for the whole of the Islamic world at a time when, throughout the Islamic countries, especially in Syria, Persia

---

(cont.)

the same thing, the clients and sedentary people who followed the 'aim at that time in all matters of sedentary culture, including the crafts and professions. (Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, translated by Franz Rosenthal, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1958, Volume 3, pp. 311, 313.)



and Indonesia, religious circles were outraged by Nāsīr's ruthless suppression of the Muslim Brethren following the attempt on his life in October, 1954.

But it is not only Islam whose interests are identified with those of Arabism as a whole. There are sentences in the article which denote that the Arabs' interests are, in fact, the same as those of the whole of humanity. He describes, for instance, the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 as disastrous "for the whole of humanity" ('ala'l insanīyah kullihā); or concludes his article by saying that the Giant, if awakened will have in its hand "the remedy for all the moral, social and political plight and sufferings of Mankind".<sup>1</sup>

Khaṭīb, therefore, by postulating a comprehensive identity of interests between Islam and Arabism on the one hand, and between Arabism and humanity on the other, does not allow any doctrinal contradiction to undermine his arguments. What is more interesting is that, as can be gathered from the passages quoted above, by Arabism Khaṭīb rather means its Egyptian component for which he pleads a leading role in the Islamic world. From this viewpoint, the Azharites' ambitions considerably exceeded those of the leaders of the Egyptian Revolution, who mostly contented themselves with the leadership of the Arab world.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, April 1956, pp. 937-941.

<sup>2</sup> See, inter alia, Mohammed Neguib, Egypt's Destiny, p. 262.

### Attitude towards Arab Leadership.

But have the Arabs got the prerequisites of this leadership? If they have, what are they? The Azharites' answers to these questions reveal as much of the basic principles of their social thinking as of their attitude towards the West.

Of the numerous factors enumerated by the ideologists of Arab nationalism as the bases of Arab unity - i.e., language, culture, religion, race, geography, etc. - the Azharites place the emphasis on the first three, which they also regard as the main potentialities of the Arab world for leading humanity on the path of salvation. In all their dissertations they throw into relief the Arabic language and Arab culture as the two main instruments with which Arab nationalism and Islamic tenets can be blended into a unified social force of limitless strength. The religious leaders' immense interest in the first factor - language - can be gauged from the enormous attention which majallah pays to Arabic by publishing regular essays under the title of lughawīyāt (lexicology) thrashing out linguistic subtleties and correcting common errors in its day-to-day use and by emphasising the necessity of cleaning "the Koran's language" from unhealthy accretions. It can also be gauged from the frequent statements by its contributors on the blessings of Arabic and its unequalled capacities for conveying shades of meaning.

Such statements are based on more or less the same arguments as

those advanced by Ḥuṣrī,<sup>1</sup> to which we referred in the last chapter, but with two major differences. Firstly, unlike Ḥuṣrī, the Azharites, in establishing the fundamental part played by language in fostering nationalism, do not seek refuge in any Western school of thought. We will explain the reason for this a little later. Secondly, all their arguments have naturally a strong religious tinge. The mere fact that the Koran has been sent down to Man in Arabic is sufficient to make its position unassailable and its value unmatched, from the linguistic, social and political points of view. On the question of preserving and promoting the Islamic/Arab culture in order to further the cause of Arabism the Azharites are more emphatic. Their attitude in this respect shows that they regard the Arab-Islamic culture as a self-sufficient phenomenon, capable of meeting the requirements of the Arabs in every field, and as a patrimony which should be safeguarded against any foreign manipulation. Majallah constantly reminds its sceptical readers of the achievements of

---

<sup>1</sup>The following passages from an article entitled "Arab Nationalism and the Part of al Azhar in its Revival" by Zakariya al Barri are worth quoting at this juncture:

"Historical and social studies have demonstrated that language is the soul of the nation; that it is the backbone and the essential constituent element of nationalities; that nations are primarily dependent on (their) linguistic unity, which makes for unity of spirit and conscience... The history of the Arab nation has taught us that Imperialism, although robbing some Arab countries of their political independence, has not been able to undermine the very existence of the Arab nation, because the Arabs continued in preserving their own language... al Azhar has been the key with which the Arab nation was released from the prison of Imperialism, preserving as it did this eternal patrimony (Arabic) by studying it from the viewpoints of grammar, syntax, eloquence, usage (wad'i), prosody and jurisprudence, poetry and prose." (Majallah, November 1955, p. 415.)

great Arab thinkers and scientists in the past and of the insidious part played by Western culture in strengthening the Western influence in Arab countries. This does not mean that the Asharites believe the Arabs not to be in need of Western technique and modernity. In fact they admit Arab needs in this respect, but qualify their admission with an interesting argument. One must differentiate, they say, between Western culture and Western science.

"Imperialism," writes Khajīb in his editorial of April 1957, "has, for us, mixed culture with science, thus causing us to believe that foreign cultures are part and parcel of foreign science, of which we are in need, and that our need of foreign culture is prior to our need of science. It (Imperialism) thus fastens the tie between our sons and those foreign cultures in a bid to make them alien to their genuine (or original, asīl) culture."<sup>1</sup>

Thus while the Arabs should be anxious to imbibe Western science, they should exercise the utmost vigilance in preventing the notions and principles of Western culture from "polluting" their thoughts and traditions.

Majallah is at pains to demonstrate to the eventual critics that its denunciation of Western culture with all its attendant evils does not mean its opposition to Western science. It does so by regularly reporting the latest industrial and scientific achievements in Arab countries, especially in Egypt, and by welcoming the teaching of Western languages in al Azhar and in the country as a whole. To convince the more incredulous of the critics it sometimes publishes on its cover photographs

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, April 1957, p. 803.

of the Azhar students working in laboratories on natural sciences.<sup>1</sup>

But in attacking Western culture in all its aspects maJallah is extremely outspoken and ruthless. So far as may be judged from the language and tone of the articles it is possible to say that the Azharites feel a deep abhorrence against Western culture. This abhorrence is sometimes expressed against some of the weak and defective aspects of Western culture (such as Western cinema, press, etc.), by asserting the superiority of Islamic institutions to their Western counterparts or, more often than not, by the condemning of Western culture as the main instrument used by Western colonialism in order to achieve its military and economic domination. Under the title "Colonialism and Cultural Colonialism" Muhammad Asin al Husaini, the Mufti of Palestine, levels virulent criticism against all vehicles of Western culture in the Arab countries. He especially deplures the presence of Western schools and universities on Arab soil. The fact that, according to the 1951 statistics, 79,000 students in Egypt, 44,000 in the Lebanon, 8,000 in Jordan and 9,000 in Syria were imbibing, what he calls "a foreign culture injurious to (our) patriotism, creed and traditions" was indeed indicative of "an extremely dangerous <sup>Western</sup> onslaught with far-reaching effects".<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>See, inter alia, issues of November 1955 and January 1956.

<sup>2</sup>maJallah, January 1956, pp. 600-608.

### Anti-Westernism.

Resentment against Western culture sometimes easily develops into resentment against everything Western. This process is especially accelerated by the misdeeds and the blunders of the Western Powers. No better example can be given of this than majallah's reaction in the course of the Suez crisis in October 1956. Whether disclosing their deep-seated hatred of the entire Western world, or merely giving vent to the anger felt at the sight of Muslim Arabs falling victim to Anglo-Franco-Israeli aggression, the Azharites launched their most bitter anti-Western campaign. It was a resentment not only against Western leaders and apostles of 'gunboat' policy towards the Arabs, but against the Western peoples as a whole.

"This is the West," announced Khaṭīb in majallah's issue of October 1956, "and such are its attitudes to justice, to peace and to human co-existence. They are all of them Anthony Edens. They are all of them Guy Mollets."

He tried to prove these generalisations by stating that people like Balfour and Eden, in adopting their anti-Arab policies, were not merely acting in purely personal capacities; nor were they acting on behalf of their governments alone. Balfour's promise to create a national home for the Jews in the heart of the Arab homeland and Eden's sabre-rattlings against the Egyptian people exercising their rights by nationalising the Canal had been but evidence of "the West's rancour against the East... a rancour which a nation harbours towards another".<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, October 1956.

According to Khajib this rancour found its expression in Rudyard Kipling's saying that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet", as well as by Byron on his way to Greece and by Hugo in his Les Orientales. Therefore, concluded Khajib, the question is greater than this or that petty quarrel. He stated "it is the question of East and West". Western statesmen had earnestly tried to prevent the awakening of the Giant by entertaining the Arabs with visual arts, sceptical philosophy and all manner of moral degradation and effeminacy (takhannuth). Khajib held "the whole of Western nations and the 20th century civilization and culture" responsible for the misdeeds committed by the British and French colonialism towards the Arabs,<sup>1</sup> a conclusion identical to one reached by Kamil following the Anglo-French entente of

---

<sup>1</sup> Aversion to Western civilization is especially noticeable from the following, rather rhetorical fragment, written in the wake of Anglo-French operations against Egypt in 1956, presumably in an issue of al ahram, and quoted in the November issue of the al-jaliliyah: "Cairo, the capital of the Islamic world and the radiant essence of the Eastern civilization. Cairo, the generous and noble (city) which opened its bosom to French and English commerce, industry and (culture) (Apparently the word culture, not having been in the original, has been inserted by al-jaliliyah's editor and for that reason put within brackets). This same Cairo is (now) being bombarded by the British and French. What a disgraceful thing! It is a shame that the clothes, which we import from their countries, should at this time be scorching our bodies! It is a disgrace that we have opened our markets to their trade, and linked our industries to theirs! It is a disgrace that we should be educating our children in their schools and institutions whether in Egypt, or abroad, in London and in Paris! It is a disgrace that we should see our wives and children looking appalled, as if asking why we have all this time been lying to them in our praises of Western civilization." (Ibid., p. 407).

1904.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the tension in Arab-West relations is conceived as the symptom of a deeper clash between Arabism and Western civilization. For this reason, so the Azharites' argument runs, Arab nationalism should insulate itself against the cultural penetration of the West and maintain its individuality, otherwise the Arabs will not succeed in their struggle. Once they take up this position they feel themselves bound to defend Arab culture and civilization in all their representations and to prove their points of excellency over other cultures and civilizations. External aggression and internal scepticism both combine to lend a strongly apologetic nature to the efforts of the Azharites, as to the entire Arab mentality at present.

One significant point on this attitude of the Azharites towards Western civilization is worthy of mention. The distinction between science and culture is not as rigid as Khaṭīb suggests. Scientific researches in every society are inevitably dominated by concepts deriving from religious, philosophical and other social convictions. The successes of great Muslim scientists in the past, such as Fārābī's discovery of contagious diseases and Khārazmī's creation of algebra, would not have been possible without belief in the Islamic conception of the universe as a dynamic and uniform phenomenon. The fact that

---

<sup>1</sup> V. *supra*, p. 148.



scientific revelations sometimes run counter to religious teaching does not in any way invalidate this assertion, as such revelations are still coloured by other spiritual characteristics prevalent in the discoverer's society.

Accordingly, Western scientific notions, when introduced into the Arab world, bring in their wake a set of technical and social changes which are regarded by the Azharites as disastrous for the emancipation and healthy progress of the Arabs. The point has been brilliantly discussed by G. E. Von Grunebaum in his essay entitled "Westernization and the Theory of Cultural Borrowing". His discussion takes the form of a critique of Arnold J. Toynbee's theses on the phenomenon of cultural borrowing. Toynbee has attempted to interpret this phenomenon in terms of four theses: (a) individual traits of an alien culture will be more readily admitted than that culture as a whole; (b) "the penetrative power of a strand of cultural radiation is usually in inverse ratio to this strand's cultural value", (c) "one element of an alien civilization, if admitted, will draw after it the rest"; (d) "the lone element may be more disturbing to the receiving civilization than the whole would have been".

The main implication of these theses, says Grunebaum, is that "initial borrowing of an essential element of an alien civilization necessarily entails in due time the almost complete taking over of all its essential elements"<sup>1</sup> - a view diametrically opposed to what Khaṭīb had

---

contended. Grunebaum seems to adopt a middle course. On the one hand, he refutes Toynbee's theses by demonstrating that integration of Indian, Greek and Persian elements into the civilization of Islam in the early Abbasid period did not lead to the extinction of the "personality" of Islam.<sup>1</sup> Islam, therefore, "is in no danger of becoming physically distinct" owing to technological borrowing from the West. But, on the other hand, he admits that the Westernization process in the Muslim world leads to "a higher rationalization of thought and the co-ordination of economy, technique and the State".

Thus Arab life is willy-nilly exposed to the impact of Western thoughts, traditions and ideas. For this reason, it is neither possible nor desirable to insulate Arab culture against alien elements. What is possible, and highly requisite, is the reinterpretation of the basic principles of this culture, and especially its religious content, in terms apposite to the necessities of our time. Islamic culture absorbed the most logical and progressive features of Greek and Persian civilizations in the past, without losing its individuality and without jeopardising Islam's political predominance. The works of Avicenna (Ibn Sinā), Averroes (Ibn Rushd), Avenpace (Ibn Bājah) and others represent in fact a masterly engrafting of the most magnificent aspects of defunct civilizations on a dynamic vigorous culture.

---

<sup>1</sup>Islam, p. 244.

More important than its aversion to Western culture is majallah's attitude to the political problem of relations with the West as a whole. As this attitude is basically hostile and negative, and as the Azharites apparently do not want to add to the Egyptian Government's troubles, it is rarely reflected in majallah's pages, although the regular reader can easily infer it from the general line of the journal's arguments. Here again the follies of the West come to al Azhar's help. As might have been expected, the Suez aggression enabled the journal to give more frequent and more eloquent expression to its thoughts on Arab-West relations. This can be observed, for instance, in a lengthy review, appearing in majallah's issues of March and April of 1957, of a book entitled (The) Islamic Culture and Modern Life, published in 1956 by the Franklin Publications and comprised of papers read at the Princeton Colloquium in the summer of 1953 by several representatives of Islamic countries and American experts on Islam. The reviewer, Muhammad Hussain, regards the conference as an aspect of the United States' efforts to substitute its influence for the declining domination of the British and French in the Islamic countries by establishing friendly ties with the Muslim peoples.

"This friendship," says the writer, "will never materialise - if it ever does - except on the basis of mutual understanding and homogeneity (mushākah) as a result of which the respective points of view will be unified, and their temperaments brought close to each other. Such mutuality does not become a reality, except by closer rapprochement between (the Arab and Western) social and ethical values, which is impossible in view of the fact that the Muslim nations cherish values opposed to those in the West."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, March 1957, p. 744.

"Therefore," concludes the writer, "the West is left with two alternatives: (a) either to 'eradicate' Islam by fostering doubts among the people of its values and basic concepts and by preventing its influence from embracing the social life of the people; or (b) "transforming" (tatwīr) Islam and turning it into an instrument for justifying the Western values and for "bringing closer the Muslim and Western nations". Muḥammad Ḥusain maintains that, as recourse to the first alternative is criminal, the Westerners have deemed it more expedient to persuade the Muslims to transform the Islamic values.<sup>1</sup>

### Reformism

It can thus be seen that the writer is against all kinds of relations with the West. He regards them not only as evils equal to the justification of Western values, but also as a means of the "transformation" of Islam. But more important still, he condemns any effort at revising the Islamic concepts and values by ascribing these attempts to the machinations of Western Imperialism. The Azharites' suspicions in regard to any Western effort to establish and expand relations with the Arabs are understandable and well-founded. Experience has led them to the conviction that every seemingly friendly and altruistic step on the part of the Western governments to win the good faith and support of the Arabs for themselves is likely to have selfish and colonialistic aims.

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, March 1957, p. 745.

These suspicions were kindled by the 'great betrayal' of the Husain-McMahon agreement during the First World War, nurtured by the ruthless and high-handed measures adopted by the French and British governments between the two wars towards their Arab Mandates and further justified by such post-war events as the creation of Israel and the Suez expedition. Just as the experience of two world wars has entitled the French and British to be acutely pessimistic over any move towards revival of a powerful centralized German government so have these events taught the Arabs to be wary of the West's friendly overtures. But views such as those of Muhammad Husain on the impossibility of genuine friendly ties between the Arabs and the West, as well as the implied appeals for the outright severance of the existing ties, are certainly untenable. They only serve to reveal the Azharites' uncertainty of their intellectual resources for standing up to the West's cultural challenge.

This uncertainty, itself a negative factor, is the most positive incentive to questioning the old values and searching for new ones. It is the breeding-ground of reformism, which is another agonizingly important problem in the religious circles of the Arab world today. It is also a problem which has become closely linked with the Arab-West relationship since there are numerous people within Arab religious circles who, like Muhammad Husain, are ready to condemn reformism as just another aspect of the West's drive to wreck the unity and strength of Islam. This was not the case in the earlier period of Arab and Islamic

awakening, i.e. towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Each of the outstanding thinkers of that period was definitely associated with a revisionist and reformist movement.<sup>1</sup>

In today's atmosphere of suspicion against the West reformism seems to be a dishonourable term to the bulk of Azharite thinkers.<sup>2</sup> No book has been better able to reflect this pessimistic attitude on reformism than Dr. Muḥammad al Bahay's al fikr al islāmī al ḥadīth wa ḡilatuhū bi'l isti'mār al ḡharbī (The Modern Islamic Thought and its Relation to the Western Colonization). Dr. Bahay is Professor of Islamic philosophy at the Faculty of Arabic Languages of al Azhar. The main premises of the writer's arguments throughout the books are that the onslaught of Western colonialization in the Muslim world has created two trends within the Muslim elite: (a) the trend to come to terms with the West in its attempt to consolidate its holds on the Muslims, (b) the trend to oppose the West and to encourage the Muslims to safeguard their heritage. According to the writer the outstanding representatives of the first trend are Sir Sayid Aḥmad Khān and Ghulām Aḥmad Qādiānī, both Indian Muslims. The best representatives of the second group are Jamal ad Dīn<sup>al</sup> Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Iqbāl.

Most of the book is devoted to denouncing the first trend as a

---

<sup>1</sup>v. supra, p. 65 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>See Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, pp. 78-81.

movement "founded by the British in the interest of Western colonialism",<sup>1</sup> and extolling the second trend as "a genuine Islamic movement to oppose Western Colonization".<sup>2</sup> The writer has also conceded the existence of a third movement, which is in fact subsidiary to the first, consisting of those Muslim thinkers and writers who unknowingly, by propagating the Western view on Islam, play into the colonialists' hands.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Bahay's main criterion in distinguishing these groups from one another is their attitude towards reformism, tajdīd. The first and third groups clamour for reform of Islamic principles and concepts, while the second group do not see any necessity for this. With such oversimplification any exponent of the inadequacy of Islamic principles to meet the requirements of our age inevitably incurs the odium of contributing to Western schemes. This becomes amply evident in those parts of the book where the writer attempts to define the nature of reformism.

"The reformist movement (ḥarakat 'at tajdīd) in Islamic thought," he writes, "has been based since the beginning of the present century on either a materialistic negation or denigration of spiritualism (ruḥīyah) or on the studies of the orientalist aimed at smearing Islam and giving a prejudiced explanation of its teachings."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> al fikr al islāmī al ḥadīth wa ṣilatuhū bi'l isti'mār al gharbī, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

It is also interesting that, in the chapter entitled "The Religious Reformism" in which the writer admits the emergence of a well-meaning and sincere reformist trend in modern Islam thought (thus contradicting his sweeping statement against reformism quoted above), he recognises Muḥammad Iqbāl as the only representative of this trend and, in fact, the whole chapter is a survey of the works and ideas of Iqbāl (from page 373 to page 436). Nevertheless the writer strongly criticizes Iqbāl for some of his suggestions which touch upon "the decisive rulings of Islam"<sup>1</sup> such as his appeal for equality between men and women in matters concerning marriage, divorce and inheritance.

As can be seen, consideration of preserving the unity of the Muslims, especially under the present conditions of Arab-West tension, constitute a serious obstacle to any reformist movement among Arab religious circles. There is no doubt that the lack of such a movement at present among these circles, especially al Azhar, should not be ascribed wholly to a stubbornness to refuse to face facts. The attitude of the Azharites on many a social issue in the Arab world, and especially in Egypt, even if surveyed during the period (1952-58) not only shows al Azhar as being well aware of the inadequacies of certain Islamic principles, but also as countenancing and even itself effecting far-reaching revisions of these principles.

---

<sup>1</sup> al Bahay, op.cit., p. 445.



A notable example of this is majallah's policy on the enfranchisement of women in Egypt and other Arab countries. The Muslim orthodoxy has always prohibited the participation of women in public affairs and political activities and has based this prohibition on many explicit prophetic traditions and interpretations of some of the verses of the Koran. After the Egyptian Revolution of July 1952 the problem of granting political rights to women, together with other progressive schemes of the new regime, assumed a fresh momentum and topicality. Directly or indirectly, the revolutionary leaders gave notice of their favourable view on allowing women a share in the running of their country's affairs but, as they had not yet firmly entrenched themselves in power and still depended largely on the blessing of religious circles, their attitude on this matter was bound to be timid and hesitant. Nevertheless, al Azhar immediately reacted against the prevailing official and unofficial mood on the political rights of women by vigorously denying the admissibility of such rights in an Islamic state and condemning all the efforts that were being made towards that aim.

"The Islamic shari'ah," announced Shaikh 'Abd ar Rahman Taj, the Rector of Al Azhar, "has forbidden the mingling (ikhtilāf) of women with men. The appeal for the grant of political rights to women is a means to the achieving of this, the women thus seeking to cover their association with men under the guise of the public interest. This is something of which Islam does not approve, and it is not permissible in any of its sects, because the shari'ah has taken cognizance of the social and moral evils that come of woman's mingling with man, as well as of the evils.... the mere probability of which suffices to justify the prohibiting and eliminating of this mingling."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, January 1953, p. 572.

The writer then refers to the fatwā issued by a special committee of al Azhar explicitly denying the social rights and obligations of woman, who "should confine herself to her house under the protection and care of her husband".<sup>1</sup>

The situation was entirely different in 1957. With its prestige considerably strengthened, both internally and externally, after the Anglo-French Suez expedition the Egyptian Government was now firmly in the saddle and independent of the blessing, and invulnerable to the "curses" of any particular group in the country. It could thus easily set in motion its revolutionary and un-Islamic schemes without fearing any major internal upheaval engendered by the agitations of organized minority groups, whose interests or ideas it could now ignore. The Egyptian Government, for instance, with the new Constitution published in August 1957, enfranchised Egyptian women. Faced with a military government determined to carry out social reforms without much concern for religious niceties the Azharites had no choice but to give in. While they did not undertake to justify what the Government were doing, their attitude in the matter was one of grudging acquiescence.

Referring to the changes in al Azhar's outlook and organization since the time of Muḥammad 'Abduh, H.A.R. Gibb writes:

"It should not surprise us, however, that al-Azhar yields slowly and reluctantly to the necessity for change and that such changes as have been made affect

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, January 1953, p. 573.

the organization of studies rather than their spirit and substance. The impatience with al-Azhar which is displayed by the Western-educated classes and the secular nationalists is easy to understand. But a school with a tradition of nearly eight hundred years behind it and, still more, a school which stands throughout the world of Islam as the guardian and (in a certain sense) the authoritative exponent of Islamic orthodoxy, cannot easily trim its sails to every passing wind."<sup>1</sup>

We might add here that the tempo of the Azahar's reluctant submission to the necessity for change is today remarkably quicker, as can be gathered from the example mentioned above, than in the time when Professor Gibb's statement was made. This accelerated speed can be ascribed to two factors: first, the irresistible pressure now exerted by 'the impatient Western-educated classes and the secular nationalists' and second, the distinction which has come to assert itself in the minds of the Azharites, as a result of the determination of a successful military leadership, between those social issues with obvious political consequences and those which can be regarded to be of purely religious, or at least, non-political import. It is interesting to compare the Azharites' submissive attitude towards socio-political reforms with their reaction to changes affecting Islamic injunctions of a purely religious nature, such as fasting, or with non-political implications such as a man's attitude towards the woman he is to marry. Any implicit or explicit act of defiance on these matters brings forth a spate of strongly-

---

<sup>1</sup> Modern Trends in Islam, p. 41.

worded fatwas and statements by eminent Azharites.<sup>1</sup>

### State and Religion

The above examples also clarify to a certain extent some aspects of the relations between government and religious circles in a Muslim country. It is important to note that the very emergence of this duality has been due to the impact of Western political thought. Theologically a monistic religion, Islam recognises no distinction between state and church.

According to Islamic tenets, the head of a Muslim state is regarded as having the dual mission of securing the worldly welfare and spiritual salvation of his subjects. The introduction, therefore, of Western concepts of government and statehood tended to upset the accepted pattern of relations between state and religion in the Muslim countries. The growing complexity of social problems, in respect of which no provision has been made in the Koran or in the thinking of Muslim jurists, prompted officialdom in these countries to adopt ideas, enact laws and make decisions which more often than not ran counter to basic Islamic rules. Even where things did not go quite so far as that the mere fact that Muslim governments found themselves compelled to seek the remedies for their social problems in non-Islamic sources created a gulf between the rulers and the religious circles. Nevertheless, this divorce

---

<sup>1</sup> See majallah's issues of March 1957, pp. 704-705, and of April 1957, article entitled "sawm ramadan".

was not sanctioned by any constitutional alteration in any of the Muslim states (with the single exception of Turkey).

An anomalous situation has thus arisen in which, theoretically, the Muslim governments enjoy the blessing of religious circles and do as they prescribe but, in practice, live outside the pale of Islamic orthodoxy. On the one hand, the necessities of political life, especially when the community is threatened from without, force the governments to solicit the assistance of the religious circle as has been sufficiently described elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> This is both because of the lack of any concrete ideology to protect these governments against the foreign challenge and because of the ease with which ideas can be put across to the masses when expressed in religious terms. On the other hand, whenever the government wants to put through some social reform in contravention of Islamic traditions, it has to do this in the face of opposition of the religious circles which, as in the example of the enfranchisement of Egyptian women, will at some time peter out. We might, therefore, describe the relation between state and religion in a given Muslim country as follows: It is a positive factor, willing to strengthen the hand of officialdom and endow it with a spiritual force, for the religious circle can still exercise a considerable influence, and is even recovering some of its ebbing prestige. However once it starts to question an official act - especially if it is one of a reformistic nature - on the plea of

---

<sup>1</sup> V. supra. p. 280 et seq.

upholding the sanctity of religious rules it is cynically ignored and easily reduced to ineffectiveness.

Herein lies one of the causes of the backwardness and obscurantism with which, in Arab countries, Western policies are so readily associated. In modern Muslim countries the orthodoxy generally ranks in popular myth among the most unpopular of the citizens. Quite apart from those parasitical attributes, hypocrisy, cant and indolence, which are such common characteristics of this element in society almost everywhere in the world, the emergence of the 'ulama' as an anti-Islamic hierarchical body is particularly responsible for this.

But the impressionability of the illiterate masses towards the insinuations of the clergy and, as has been seen, the rulers' dependence on them in times of distress for the spiritual mobilization of the people have so far preserved the clergy against all opposition. A foreign act of aggression or high-handedness towards a Muslim country thus serves the twin purposes of bringing back the 'ulama' into the picture and so providing them with a new chance to perpetuate their hold over the masses and of restoring their weakening control over officialdom.

There is a further reason for the unpopularity of the 'ulama' with the intellectuals which is also sometimes associated with the West, namely, that, representing basically an important part of the forces favouring the status quo, the 'ulama' are opposed to any revolutionary change in social and economic conditions, especially if this be of a Western colouring. Although it would not be very difficult to find among

them individuals exemplifying a successful combination of Islamic principles with socialistic tendencies, the 'ulamā' and the religious circles on the whole are justly regarded as reactionaries.

Since one of the distinctive features of Western colonialism in the prevailing myth is also its hostility to social and economic progress in the colonized lands the 'ulamā' thus come to figure as the unconscious allies of colonialism. The adjective "unconscious" is changed into "conscious" when a Western colonial Power makes common cause with the domestic religious leadership in opposition to the reformistic/anti-Colonial policy of a Muslim government. This is what happened, during the 'twenties, in Afghanistan, when King Amānullāh, by pursuing a policy at once directed against British interests in India and against the superstitious and obscurantist teachings of the mullas, found himself opposed by the combined forces of the British and the mullas and ended by succumbing to them.

But in addition to their reactionary characteristics, the 'ulamā' have also their anti-colonialist propensities which, as shown before,<sup>1</sup> are chiefly based on their opposition to the basic principles of Western civilization. This second trait often serves as a counterpoise to the first one, i.e. their reactionary attitude on social reforms, so saving them from out-and-out disaster. Here colonialism should be called the

---

<sup>1</sup>iv. supra, p. 211.

unconscious ally of Muslim orthodoxy because in almost every Muslim country the 'ulamā' have been at their best and strongest whenever Western economic and political pressure on that country has been at its highest. In Persia, for instance, after a long period of apparent extinction - either because of the anti-clerical policy of Rīṣā Shah, or owing to the subsequent growth of the Communist and other anti-religious forces - the 'ulamā' and mullas made their impressive reappearance in the political arena of the country when the former Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, together with the British Government, resorted to a Palmerstonian policy towards Persia. In contrast, when the British pressure came to an end with the coming into power of a pro-Western government in 1953, the fortunes of the 'ulamā' started upon their downward course, culminating in the complete eclipse of such well-known religious figures as Ayatullāh Kāshānī.

The intellectuals are, therefore, justified in holding the particular onslaughts of Western colonialism responsible for the perpetuation of the actual or potential influence of the fanatic and reactionary section of Muslim orthodoxy in their countries.

The period of relative respite from Western pressure on the Arab countries, especially on Egypt, which started with the failure of the Suez expedition in October 1956, robbed al Azhar and its counterparts in other Arab countries of any opportunity to play a role in respect of important social and economic problems or to exercise any authority over the rulers. In Egypt this might be called "the period of laicization",



during which the Government set out to grapple with a great many internal difficulties in more or less complete disregard of the misgivings of religious circles and even, as in the case of enfranchisement of women, in defiance of Islamic traditions. The respite, however, was interrupted by the interference of the American and British governments in Lebanon and Jordan respectively in the summer of 1958 as a result of the Lebanese civil war and of the Iraqi Revolution of 14 July. But its most spectacular interruption came in April 1959 with the first open clash between Arab nationalism and Communism.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the outcome of that clash there is no doubt that it presented al-Azhar and others with an ideal opportunity for coming to the fore and taking advantage of the ideological resourcelessness of the Arab rulers. It would certainly take the irreligious and progressive Arabs a considerable time to neutralize the effects of such a triumph of the religious circles over the laic forces.

It thus becomes apparent that the tempo of social reforms in Arab and other Islamic countries, as well as the final result of the present inter-action between the clergy and laity in these countries are, to a considerable extent, determined by the issue of the Arab - West conflict and especially by the attitude of the West.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> V. supra, P. 280 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> A point which requires special emphasis here is the distinction which one must draw between the religious convictions of the people and the power of the clergy in Muslim countries. The latter can give no reliable idea of the strength of the former. One reason for this, which

### Conclusions

In 1947 Professor Gibb ascribed the tension in Islamic thought to the conflict between the transcendentalist and immanentist wings within Islam. He added, however, that "the two wings were brought together by their common opposition to European control of Muslim lands and their struggle against the pervasive influences of European culture and material civilization". "The conflict," he concluded, "remains subordinate to the need of maintaining as far as possible a united front against Christendom."<sup>1</sup>

In so far as the Arab-Muslim world in the middle of the twentieth century is concerned the above remark can be said to have been fatally confirmed. Not only the transcendentalist-versus-immanentist but, in fact, all conflict within Islam has been suspended<sup>2</sup> in the face of growing

---

(cont.)

is more general, is the sizeable proportion of those believers who in almost any religion prefer to live outside the pale of religious institutions and, more important than that, do not wish to give any ceremonial expression in their faith. Another reason, which is peculiar to Islamic thought, is the immediacy with which a Muslim can establish contact with God - a fact which constantly exposes the clergy in Muslim countries to accusations of uselessness and obstruction. These two reasons provide an explanation for the paradox which can normally be observed in any Muslim country, whereby the religious beliefs and sentiments of the people can be at their strongest, while the power and influence of the 'ulama's are at their weakest. They also serve to explain the superficial contradiction which can be observed in our assessment of the relations between Arab nationalism and Islam.

---

<sup>1</sup> Modern Trends in Islam, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> This otherwise harmful 'truce' has had at least one healthy result:

(cont.)

Western pressure.<sup>1</sup> This trend has been evident not only in the case of extremist, lay movements (.e.g. the Muslim Brethren), but also with regard to such learned bodies as al Azhar. One can in fact observe a curious similarity between the attitudes of the extremist and the conservative wings towards the internal and external problems of the Arab-Muslim world. 'Avoidance of the battlegrounds of theological disputation' and the subordination of the religious aim to politics have been characteristics first of the Brethren<sup>2</sup> and then of al Azhar since the Second World War. Arab nationalism and Islam have thus joined their forces in a united front 'against Christendom'. Does this also mean that the Arab countries have become more Islamized than before? Here we must make distinction between the formal and the substantial aspects of Islamization. In the Muslim countries as a whole, whether Arab or non-Arab, religion has become, in the words of a Western observer, a hue with which

---

(cont.)

the formal ending of the old sunni-shi'i war with the fatwa issued by Shaikh Mahmūd Shaltūt, the Rector of al Azhar, on the permissibility of a Muslim adhering to the 'imami-shi'i sects'. Instrumental in bringing about this rapprochement was dar at taqrīb bain al-madhāhib al-islāmīyah (The Society for the Bringing Together of the Islamic Sects) in Cairo (see Muhammad Taqī al Qummī, qissat' at taqrīb, dar at taqrīb, Cairo, April 1960.)

---

<sup>1</sup> Qummī, op.cit., pp. 6, 9, 11.

<sup>2</sup> The Moslem Brethren, pp. 42, 81, 106. See also Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, p. 47.

social and political institutions are coloured.<sup>1</sup> This is an absurd, but inevitable, development. On the face of it most Arab countries today (look more "Islamic" than they did, say, thirty years ago. (Exceptions like Tunisia are not many.) The same trend can be observed in other Muslim countries.<sup>2</sup> Even in Turkey there has been a similar evolution, marked by a series of concessions on the part of the state to the religious leaders, such as the admissibility of reciting the Koran in the original and the creation of a high religious school in Ankara.<sup>3</sup> All

---

<sup>1</sup> John S. Badeau, "Islam and the Modern Middle East", in Foreign Affairs, October 1959.

<sup>2</sup> In Persia, ramaḡān (the fasting month) is observed today by the Government more strictly than ever before. The muḡurram demonstrations which were banned by Riḡā Shah during the best part of his reign are now being held with greater passion and enthusiasm. The statements of leading personalities are often sprinkled with references to the excellency of Islamic instructions and the necessity of promoting the religious convictions of the people. The teaching of fiqh (the Islamic law) at the primary and secondary schools is conducted with greater care and perseverance.

<sup>3</sup> One of the most striking features of the present return to Islam is the astonishing rhythm of new mosque building. Exact figures are unobtainable, but officials in the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Ankara estimate that not less than 5,000 new mosques have been built in Turkey since 1950, of which about 50 are in Ankara alone. The amount of financial assistance given by the Government for this purpose is difficult to ascertain but it is known to be large.

This figure of 5,000 new mosques built in the 10 years since 1950 is, by a curious coincidence, not far from the figure which is given by the Ministry of Education for the number of new schools built during the same period. This silent struggle for scarce resources between mosques and schools seems highly symbolic of the greater struggle between the forces of secularism and Islam in Turkey.

It is illustrated by the controversy over the new secondary schools for imams and preachers which come under the Ministry of Education. These

(cont.)

this has lured some Western observers into talking of Islamic reformation in the Arab and other Muslim countries.

But as was noted in the previous chapter the evolution is in fact of a superficial nature and marks the efforts of the Muslim countries to compensate for their lack of a national ideology. The more overwhelming the challenges of the West and other alien powers to the national traditions and way of life in these countries, the more vigorous will become the efforts of officials to ensure the formal observance of Islamic rules and to deepen the Islamic hue of the social and political institutions. But beneath this appearance of religious orthodoxy is a constant ferment of ideas and a ceaseless disintegration of traditions. Facing the inevitability of adapting themselves to the great industrial and technical revolutions of our time the Muslim people, including the Arabs, unhesitatingly and sincerely imbibe Western teachings in these two fields. But together with industrial schemes and technical devices comes the invasion of Western thoughts. In this agonizing situation some Muslim

---

(cont.)

schools, which have increased in number from seven to 19 since 1951, and will be further expanded, are producing about 4,500 graduates every seven years, for religious work in the towns and villages. The instruction they receive in the schools, though mainly centred on Muslim theology and the study of Arabic and Persian, is today "westernized" by the addition of scientific subjects, mathematics, history, and one European language."

(The Times, 22nd February 1960.)

governments are bold enough to defy the will of the orthodoxy and put through the reforms which modernity requires.

Others remain straddling and hesitant, but still see no alternative to infringing some of the most outdated religious rulings, not in order to give themselves a semblance of progressiveness, but merely to solve part of their internal difficulties. For them this infringement is a matter, not of vanity, but of common sense.

To sum up. If we take cognizance of the two parallel trends in the social texture of the Arab countries, namely the growing emphasis on the formal Islamic character of the state institutions and achievements, and the equally rapid and substantial laicization of nearly every branch of social life, we shall not be puzzled by the above mentioned seeming contradiction. The degree of an Islamic state's reliance on the 'ulama' depends on how much the state finds it necessary to ensure the continuation of the first trend; and this, in its turn, depends first and foremost upon the amount of Western political and ideological pressure. In extreme cases, such pressure enables the 'ulama' to get the upper hand, to arrest the process of laicization and even to neutralize its effects. It can thus be seen that, while Western technique, science and certain political traditions help the Arab peoples to overcome their backwardness in various fields - a help which even the most extremist, anti-Western Arabs and other Muslims do not hesitate to acknowledge - Western 'imperialism', by its ill-advised and high-handed tactics, represented by the Suez expedition and Algerian war, force officialdom to seek refuge with the

orthodoxy. This development in its turn will bring about the re-integration of the state and religion which, as has been pointed out earlier, are at the moment practically, but not legally, divorced from each other. In the event the West has antagonized both the orthodoxy and the intelligentsia. It has antagonized the orthodoxy because of the basic incompatibility which the 'ulamā' find between Islam and the whole of Western civilization - an incompatibility which some of them, including the Azharites, do not think to be removable. It has antagonized the intelligentsia, since they hold the Western imperialistic policy responsible for the protracted existence and activity of the superstitious, reactionary and parasitical strata of Muslim clergy. One harmful result of this situation is that the necessity of modernization for the Muslim countries ( which is mainly a 'cosmopolitan' problem the solution to which is regarded desirable by all parties) becomes immersed in the vortex of "the cold war" between Islam and Christianity and is often gainsaid by the extremist followers of the former as a fulcrum of Western economic and political domination.

It was stated at the beginning of this chapter that the clergy in Arab countries have taken part in the movement of Arab nationalism mainly to repudiate the accusations of reaction and obstruction levelled against them by the rising generation of Westernized Arabs, as well as to salvage their waning prestige by interpreting their principles in terms appropriate to the aims of Arab nationalism. After analysing the views of the most learned of the contemporary Arab-Muslim religious theorists, it is now possible to say that none of these aims can be achieved

so long as hatred for anything Western and Westernized forms one of the fundamental beliefs of those erudites.

We have blamed Western imperialism for the occasional violent eruption of this hatred, which seems to be based on a mistaken view held by the 'ulamā' or part of them, on the whole course of human history. It is noteworthy that, as we have considered, the 'ulamā' do not give any expression to this hatred or, to use a euphemism, to their doctrinal opposition to Western civilization as a whole, except when the Western Powers by their acts of imperialistic oppression invoke the hostile feelings of all Muslims. This only goes to show that the 'ulamā' themselves are aware of the irrationality of this hatred and, therefore, do not give vent to it except in moments of emotional explosions of the masses, when there is no time for making a cool and balanced judgment on the real causes of a crisis.



## Chapter Five

### MILITARISM

After analysing the impact of the West on the theoretical aspect of Arab nationalism, that is, its basic ideas as well as its religious content, we shall now proceed to study the extent to which the West has impinged on the practical side of Arab nationalism. One of the main vehicles through which the ideas of Arab nationalism are today being put into practice is militarism.

The following chapter tries to explain the upsurge which militarism, both as an idea and as a social institution, has enjoyed in the Arab countries from 1952 up to the present time. It starts by surveying the position of the Arab armies during the last fifteen years and then proceeds to assess the Western impact on their rising power and prestige.

As will be noted, contrary to its Western counterpart, Arab militarism has a firm religious basis, i.e. the idea of jihād; that is why we have devoted some space to surveying and criticizing jihād in its past and present forms.

---

In those Arab countries which have experienced the army's accession to power following peaceful (Egypt) or violent (Syria, Iraq) changes of regime since 1949 the military elite today performs two important functions:

(a) as a "conscious, independent agent"<sup>1</sup> of national expression; (b) as a vehicle of social change.

### I The Army: Agent of Nationalist Expression

The army's first function, in so far as the Arab Middle East is concerned, dates back to the 'Arabi Revolt (1879-1882). Under the impact of Ottoman decline and increasing European influence the native army officers, outraged at the Ottoman favouritism towards the Turks and Circassians, made common cause with the other elites, "notably the writers and the religious leaders",<sup>2</sup> in a general movement of opposition to foreign, non-Muslim exploiters. The leadership of the movement was soon taken over by the army officers who, in their drive towards improving their position in the hierarchy, had "found themselves a political vortex of great attractive power".<sup>3</sup> Though the movement failed to maintain its position owing to British intervention (1882) "it gave Egyptians some glorious moments of self confidence which later generations could seek to emulate".<sup>4</sup>

The British Occupation of Egypt and the darkening shadow of Ottoman despotism over Syria rendered impossible the recurrence of the 'Arabi experience in any part of the Arab World. It was not until a few years

---

<sup>1</sup> Morroe Berger, Military Elite and Social Change, sub-title: Egypt since Napoleon, Princeton University, 1960, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

before the First World War that ambitious Arab officers again set about organizing the discontented elements against foreigners. This new phase of the military-nationalist activity was marked by the creation in 1912<sup>1</sup> or 1914<sup>2</sup> of al 'ahd (The Covenant), to which we referred in the previous chapter. The founder of this secret society was 'Aziz 'Alī al Miṣrī, an "Egyptian Arab Officer" in the Ottoman Army who had already participated in the creation of al muntada'l adabī (the Literary Club) and the secret qahtānīyah<sup>3</sup>, both centres of Arab nationalist stirrings in the Ottoman Empire.

Miṣrī graduated from the military academy in Constantinople in 1904 and soon after that, "prompted by his Arab national ideas as by his devotion to the Ottoman Empire",<sup>4</sup> joined the Committee of Union and Progress. Taking advantage of the general Arab frustration in the C.U.P. following the 1908 Revolution, Miṣrī founded al 'ahd with the aim of securing internal independence for the Arab countries while admitting the necessity for maintaining the Caliphate "in the hands of the Ottoman family".<sup>5</sup> As stated in the previous chapter al 'ahd thus appealed for<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>al jarīdah, Cairo, August 18, 1955, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Antonius, op.cit., p. 114.

<sup>3</sup>V. supra, p. 157

<sup>4</sup>Dr. Hasan Saab, The Arab Federalists of the Ottoman Empire, p. 235.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>6</sup>V. supra, p. 245.

the establishment of a Turco-Arab empire "similar in architecture to the Austro-Hungarian edifice"<sup>1</sup> - an aim, that is, similar to that of qaḥṭānīyah, "expressed in soldierly parlance".<sup>2</sup> The Society's membership was exclusive to military men and the Iraqi element, "being the most numerous in the Ottoman army, was particularly strong"<sup>3</sup> in its councils. The area of activities was extended to all the provinces of the Empire "from Salonica to Yemen".<sup>4</sup> In February 1914 Miṣrī was arrested by the Ottoman authorities and was sentenced to death in a secret military court. A wave of indignation and protest at once swept over the Arab world. His sentence was later commuted to one of fifteen years with hard labour but, as the Arab agitation against the injustice of the sentence continued, he was pardoned and set free. Thereupon Miṣrī sailed for Egypt and "received an enthusiastic welcome. His trial had shaken the Arab World more profoundly, perhaps, than any single act of Turkish tyranny, and greatly hardened the Arab will to freedom, for it had moved the masses as well as thinkers".<sup>5</sup> Even after Miṣrī's departure al 'ahd continued its activities. On the morrow of Turkey's entry into the First World War Miṣrī warned, from Cairo, his fellow partners of al 'ahd "not to be tempted

---

<sup>1</sup>Saab, op.cit., p. 236.

<sup>2</sup>Antonius, op.cit., p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>4</sup>Saab, op.cit., p. 235.

<sup>5</sup>Antonius, op.cit., p. 121.

into hostile action against the Ottoman Empire".<sup>1</sup> But after the conclusion of the Sharīf-McMahon agreement al 'abd gave up its "loyalist federalism" to revolutionary separatism.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly the growing disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was also instrumental in bringing about this change of policy. It made an invaluable contribution to the Arab Revolt by offering the services of many of its members. After the First World War, al 'abd provided the Arab states of the Fertile Crescent with leaders, commanders and officers.

The significance of al 'abd as a pattern for the military-nationalist movements after the Second World War, especially the ḡubāṭ' al aḡrār (the Free Officers), was immense. Nāṣir has spoken of Miṡrī as "the spiritual father of the Egyptian military revolution".<sup>3</sup> Similar compliments to Miṡrī can be found in the memoirs of the other leaders of the 1952 comp d'état.<sup>4</sup>

The status of the army in the Arab countries since the Second World War has run a full circle from the height of popularity, before and during the Palestinian war, to the depths of disgrace after that war, especially after the unsuccessful and sometimes "black" experiments of military dictatorship in Syria, and then back to the pinnacle of popularity following the climax of the West-Arab conflict in 1956.

---

<sup>1</sup> Saab, op.cit., p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>4</sup> Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, pp. 26-27, 34, 108.

The Palestinian war of 1948 and the defeats suffered by the Arabs at the hands of the Jews, followed by the setting in of the feelings of political isolation, focussed on the Arab armies all the popular hopes of revenge and restoration of Arab prestige. This process had a dual effect: On the one hand, it became a necessity that the honour of the army should be preserved and even enhanced by every means; that is why, in any assessment of Arab disasters in the past, especially in the "elegies" on the Palestinian war, no important charge is brought against the Arab armies in the field.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the process further disposed the Arabs to dismiss the distinction between the military and the civil.

Finding itself the repository of national hopes, the military elite in the most advanced of the Arab countries deemed it necessary as a preliminary step to do away with the regime of the discredited old-fashioned politicians or mukhadrams, first in Syria and then in Egypt. In this task they were helped by the failure of outwardly democratic regimes in the Arab countries. The experiment of the new Arab generation with democracy was at no time a happy one.

"For," says Majid Khadduri, "no sooner had democracy begun to operate, with its complicated procedural problems of electioneering and parliamentary debates [to say nothing of the endless squabbles that devel-

---

<sup>1</sup> See, inter alia, Muḥammad Darawzah, al waḥdat' al 'arabīyah, pp. 524-544.

oped among rival parties and politicians), than the people began to learn how scandalously its process could be misused by unscrupulous leaders. To the old school, democracy failed to command the respect or allegiance of the people in the same way as Allah's law had done in the past. The activist character of democratic politics appeared too vulgar and too worldly in the eyes of pious Moslems, who have habitually revered the awe-inspiring traditional institutions."<sup>1</sup>

What rendered the situation more difficult, continues Khadduri, was the absence of any significant middle class with interests intermediate to those of the few rich or of the many poor. Such a middle class would have championed democracy against autocracy and feudalism, as did the middle class of Western Europe.<sup>2</sup> In these circumstances the military elite offered the only hope of realizing nationalist hopes. But, as will be shown presently, the army's intervention in politics produced disastrous results, by the fall of 1954, in both these countries.

In Syria, the coup d'etat of 30 March 1949 by Colonel Husni az Za'im, Army Chief of Staff, was primarily hailed by the People's Party (hizb ash sha'b), one of the oldest and most important of the Syrian parties, and by large sections of ordinary people who had tired of the arid circles of Syrian politics and the misrule of a self-seeking oligarchy. Although Colonel Za'im's subsequent high-handedness reversed the process and turned the popular jubilation into accumulating fury the

---

<sup>1</sup>The Army Officer: His Role in Middle Eastern Politics, Social Forces in the Middle East, edited by Sydney Nettleton Fisher, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1955, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Syrian Army's prestige does not seem to have suffered.<sup>1</sup> A second coup by Colonel Ḥinnāwī was also welcomed by the People's Party and, later on, when he gave his support to the project of Greater Syria, Pan-Arabists and a number of independent politicians of high standing also enlisted their favour on his side. It was certainly thanks to understanding and good relations between the army and the people that the general elections of November 1949 were held with a certain amount of freedom, and the People's Party gained ascendancy in the new Chamber. But a number of issues, among which the most important being the problem of unity with Iraq and that of the constitutional shape that the new regime was going to take, threatened to upset these relations. The threat became increasingly serious as the political parties began to clamour for a new democratic constitution and, in the autumn of 1949, the army's patience reached breaking-point:<sup>2</sup> A coup, the third within nine months, was staged by Colonel Adīb Shishaklī on 19 December 1949. The nationalist and ba'ath parties at first did not give way to despondency and continued to lend their support to Shishaklī, who shrewdly welcomed their cooperation to play them off against his staunchest opposing forces in the country, the People's Party. This period of mariage de convenance between the Shishaklī regime and the civil power came to an end in April 1952 when all parties in Syria were dissolved by decree. The ensuing two

---

<sup>1</sup> Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, p. 100 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 106 et seq.



years witnessed, on the one hand, the pursuance of a policy of repression and naked dictatorship by the Shishaklī regime, and a mounting popular animosity against army circles, on the other. When a group of nationalist officers carried out another coup in February 1954 the air was so heavy with anti-military feeling that these officers deemed it wise to keep in the background in favour of the civilians.<sup>1</sup>

In Egypt the events followed a similar pattern but, owing to the existence of a relatively less noisy and less active political life, the pattern was far simpler. There the army's claim to be the saviour of the nation enjoyed some historical justification, especially in the light of the 'Arabī Revolt, as briefly noted above, which never failed to arouse deep feelings in the army's favour. When the army struck its blow in July 1952 the party system was so much discredited that it could be dispensed with in any arrangement regarding the lot of the Egyptians - a sharp contrast to what happened in Syria. The army's action was greeted by the people with patent relief bordering on enthusiasm. The first three months of General Najīb's rule passed with the Wafdist leaders and mukhdarams under house arrest, and the people impatiently watching the slow pace of the new regime's achievements in respect to its two main declared aims - the suppression of corruption and redistribution of land. Deep frustrations developed as the Najīb regime, encountering serious

---

<sup>1</sup>Ziadeh, op.cit., pp. 126-141.

obstacles in carrying out its policies, made attempts to curry favour with the Wafdists, Saadists and other moribund political forces.<sup>1</sup> After seventy one years of political passivity the Egyptian army had again stepped into the country's history and, this time, contrary to the 'Arābī drama, had succeeded in overthrowing the corrupt regime; this was a unique opportunity to meet the popular expectations of the army and Najīb's overtures with discredited politicians dangerously frustrated these expectations.<sup>2</sup> Najīb's subsequent proclamation of the revival of political parties and the re-establishment of parliamentary institutions prompted his opponents to vigorous actions which culminated in his removal from the presidency (14 November 1954). All this greatly damaged the army's prestige and heartened its adversaries who, presumably through the agency of the Muslim Brethren, went to the lengths of making an attempt on Premier Nāṣir's life. Persecution of the Muslim Brethren leaders only served to evoke stronger feelings against the army, not only in Egypt, but in all Muslem countries from Indonesia to Sudan. By the end of 1954, from every corner of the Sunni world, messages of denunciations, of warning and of exhortations were pouring in on Colonel Nāṣir and his colleagues.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Neguib, op.cit., p. 170 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Wheelock, Nasser's New Egypt, p. 32 et seq., The Passing of Traditional Society, p. 242 et seq.

<sup>3</sup>The Moslem Brethren, p. 151.

As can be seen, the years 1953-54 marked a drastic fall in the popularity of the army in Syria and Egypt and the upsurge of the trends opposing military rule. In Syria five years, and in Egypt two years, of trial in military government had ended, at least theoretically, in complete fiasco. A serious rift had occurred between the military and civil brands of Arab nationalism, and long-standing respect for the army had been unmistakably undermined.

It took the Western policies towards the Arab countries after 1954 to salvage the sinking prestige of the Egyptian and Syrian armies and bring them to their zenith of popularity during the forthcoming years.

Western intervention in this respect mainly took the form of a series of diplomatic moves aimed at buttressing Western political and economic interests in the Middle East as a whole. We shall discuss these moves more fully in the chapter entitled "Neutrality". Here suffice it to point out that first the British-Iraqi authorship of the Baghdad Pact (February 1955) offended the nationalist feelings in Syria and especially in Egypt where there has been a well-founded claim to Arab leadership. Then came the withdrawal of Anglo-American promised aid for the Aswan Dam (July 1955) and the nationalization of the Suez Canal as a riposte to this (August 1956), which all rallied the civil nationalists in Egypt round the army and roused strongly sympathetic sentiments in Syria. The Suez climax put an end to the timid attitudes of the civilians and galvanized the uneasy and implicit coalition between them and the army, with army leadership rendered inevitable. The militarists' status among

the non-committed Afro-Asian countries, already enhanced by President Nāṣir's participation in the Bandung Conference (April 1955), was also favourably affected by all these developments.

By the end of 1955 the Egyptian military elite, as led by Nāṣir, had become the most genuine spokesman of Arab nationalist feelings.

## II The Army: Vehicle of Social Reform

The concept of the military elite as the most efficient factor of social reform is not confined to modern Arab nationalists; In the West its earliest example can be found in the Roman Constitution, which rested finally on the most successful military organization in history. The Roman citizens and the Roman army were one; the army "assembled in its centuries was the chief lawmaking body in the Senate".<sup>1</sup> The concept received its modernist exposition at the hands of German nationalists in the nineteenth century who, encouraged by the adventures of the Bismarckian leadership and stirred by the wish for the advancement of Germany's great power status, had come to regard militarism as "the only guarantee that social relations might proceed undisturbed".<sup>2</sup> Most of the Western democratic countries have, however, acted against the advice of the German nationalists by keeping the army isolated from domestic politics. Al-

---

<sup>1</sup>Will Durant, Caesar and Christ, Simon and Chuster, New York, 1944, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Shanahan, Friedrich Naumann, p. 372.

though "military advice has often been sought on foreign policy" (such as in the United States) and "persons whose career have been in the military service are not frequently elected, or appointed to high political positions", the military has seldom chosen to occupy high political office through "the weapon of its own profession".<sup>1</sup>

In the Arab World the tradition of the army acting as the initiator of social change in recent history dates back to the era of Muḥammad 'Alī (1805-1848). The shock of the Napoleonic adventure and its display of science and technology "made it possible for a conqueror like Muḥammad 'Alī to envision an empire built upon these amazing sources of power over men and things".<sup>2</sup> In pursuit of this desire he carried out an extensive programme of modernisation of which the main aim was, as noted before,<sup>3</sup> to create a powerful, modernized army. His greatest impact on recent Egyptian history was in "providing later generations of modernizers with a glorious era to look back upon" - an era in which the army had played - perhaps unconsciously - the dominant role. Under the British tutelage the Egyptian officers, because of forming a disciplined, cohesive unit "by the nature of their calling and professional education", became "the strongest and most solid native elite familiar with Western

---

<sup>1</sup> Khadduri, The Army Officer, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Berger, op.cit., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> supra, p. 30.

patterns of the nationalized application of violence".<sup>1</sup> When British imperial power started to decline, the minds of many of the younger officers came to be pre-occupied with the ideas of nationalism and political and social reform.<sup>2</sup>

All these features of the military elite became more marked after the Second World War, not only in Egypt, but in all the Arab Middle East, where men of the military profession gradually became the most prosperous stratum of the nation. The reason is not far to seek. The necessities of the cold war as a whole and the special problem of Arab-Israeli relations forced the Arab and other Islamic governments in the area to concentrate their resources on defence even, and often, at the expense of the economic development of their countries. The pro-Western governments did this under Western pressure, exerted in the guise of military treaties, with a view to combating the Communist threat, direct or indirect, internal or external. The neutral governments did it to shield themselves against the expansionist schemes, real or imagined, of their pro-Western neighbours. Both sets of governments armed themselves heavily in the face of a rapidly-developing Israel. The upshot was that military men were well-paid, well-fed and well-housed, while the large masses of the people became increasingly poor and impotent.

---

<sup>1</sup> Berger, op.cit., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

The above development has given rise, in the social structure of the Middle Eastern countries, to a new division, mainly economic, cutting across all the other extant social, economic and political divisions. Although there are other prosperous groups in society, the army's prosperity, coupled as it is with unassailable power, assumes a special character.

The army thus seems to be in the process of turning into a separate class with distinct individuality and well-guarded privileges, seething with political ambitions and ready to overrule the views and demands of other potent pressure groups hitherto dominating the political scene. On the one hand, "since the advent of Western influence, the separation of the military from political and religious elites and the recruitment of officers from classes other than at or near the top of the social hierarchy the military elite has become highly Westernized in a technological-ideological sense and alienated from the political and economic interests of the upper classes".<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, they seek to awaken the national consciousness of sections of the population, mainly the peasants and the urban workers, which had previously lain outside the political community.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Marxist doctrine, in a bourgeois society, whether monarchical or democratic republic, such institutions as the army and

---

<sup>1</sup>Berger, op.cit., p. 31. See also Gibb, Whither Islam?, pp. 60-61.

<sup>2</sup>Berger, op.cit., p. 30.

the civil service form part of its "superstructure", represented by the various organs of the state. The characteristics and composition of the "superstructure" are determined by the "under-structure" of the society in such a way as to serve the interests of the economically dominating class.

With their rebellion against the existing order and their negation of all narrow-minded class convictions, and especially with their drive against the special classes with which they might be considered to share the same economic interests, the armies in some of the Middle Eastern countries provide a striking exception to this Marxist concept. Although the leaders and the majority of the officers of the Egyptian and Syrian armies belong to the middle class they may be considered, by virtue of their achievements so far, as social groups without specific attachment to any of the existing classes and avowedly devoted to the service of the whole of their nations. The theory of "The Middle Class" character of the army does not seem to be tenable. It is evident that, in the Arab countries, as in other under-developed lands, any progressive movement should be primarily aimed at (a) effecting a speedy solution of the land problem to improve the living standards of the peasantry, which forms the majority of the nation, and (b) strengthening the position of national industries by restricting the freedom of foreign firms and other economic and financial interests in the country. These two aims, which have been and are the minimum objectives of every socialist-minded, nationalist government in the Middle East, necessarily lead at the outset to the



growth of the middle class. This development has lent some plausibility to the concept that the armies in these countries are tools of the Middle Class. The truth, however, is the reverse of this.

Even the implementation of the most orthodox socialist schemes in any of the Middle Eastern countries would result in a growth of the bourgeoisie because of the release of vast economic and financial resources accumulated in the hands of a few big landlords or financiers, as well as the improved position of the national markets in the face of foreign competition. Therefore, the fact that the policies of the armies in some Arab countries have so far promoted the interests of the middle class should not be regarded as a sign of their subjugation to the middle class's interests. Besides, the policies of the middle class are often characterised by their temperate and middle-of-way tendencies. The policies adopted by the Egyptian and Syrian armies after their coming into power have so far had a strong revolutionary tang, quite untypical of the attitudes of such countries as India, which are distinctly dominated by middle class interests.

The present actual or potential domination of the army over the civilian groups<sup>1</sup> is bound to persist in some Middle Eastern countries perhaps until and unless these countries achieve a high degree of economic

---

<sup>1</sup>There are, however, other countries in the Middle East in which armies, in spite of all their power and potentialities, remain the faithful servants of the ruling classes. This has been either due to paucity or even lack of political dynamism and ambition within the armies, or to the complex system through which a close association between the army and the civilian rulers has been made possible. Afghanistan represents the case of the military lack of interest in politics, and Persia that of the military-civilian coalition.

and political progress so as, at least, to remove the social and economical unbalance between the military and the civil. Before such an equalization takes place all efforts for the establishment of a truly democratic regime are doomed to failure. In view of all these facts one is often tempted to entertain the opinion that it is both realistic and fair for these countries to entrust the armies with the power to rule as the trustees of the national authorities for a transitional period during which the proper economic and political transformation of the national life should be carried out. This is what is actually happening now in Egypt, although the military leaders in that country do not seem to conceive their rule as an ad hoc arrangement, but rather as the implementation of a historical mission exclusively designated to them.<sup>1</sup> In Iraq the military leadership is not endowed with the same "messianic" character as in Egypt and seems to be maintained in power by sheer force. The Sudan presents a clear example of military government being called into being by the "bankruptcy of a parliamentary system".<sup>2</sup> There, contrary to Egypt, Syria and Iraq, "parliamentary government on its extinction found no defenders".<sup>3</sup> In the other Arab countries, where despotic theocracies reign supreme - in Saudi Arabia, in the Yemen and the Sheikhdoms - the material and spiritual difference between the armies and the masses do not seem to be so

---

<sup>1</sup>The Philosophy of the Revolution, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>P.M.Holt, A Modern History of the Sudan, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961, p. 180.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

profound as to justify a strictly military rule. Besides, the traditional Islamic monism in politics, represented by the blending of the spiritual and temporal authorities in the Amīr, Sulṭān etc., blurs in the public mind any distinction between the military and the civil. The Lebanon is the only Arab country where, thanks to a relatively fair distribution of incomes between all the classes of the people, the political parties are still able, in spite of all their internecine conflicts, to exercise a considerable influence over the political life of the country. The fact that the high prestige and resourcefulness of a military leader like General Shihāb has played an important part in the preservation of the civilians' hold and taking the edge off the militarists' ambitions should not, of course, be minimized.<sup>1</sup>

### III Doctrinal Factors

We have tried in the foregoing pages to throw light on the social and political factors which have helped the armies in the most advanced of the Arab countries to achieve their present dominance. But it is equally important to familiarize ourselves with the ideas which, during recent years, have come to provide the most reliable spiritual support for Arab militarism. As we hinted at the beginning of the present chapter, outstanding among these ideas is the Islamic concept of jihād. In the following pages we shall try to study the development of this concept from the time of its inception up to the present time.

---

<sup>1</sup>Arnold Hottinger, Mu'ama' and Parties in the Lebanese Crisis of 1958, op.cit., pp. 134-135.

#### IV Historical Background

Jihād, or holy war against the infidels, represents one of the main characteristics of Islam as compared with Christianity. There are verses in the Koran which preach this militancy in a clear and unmistakable way. "When you encounter the infidels," prescribes the ~~fourth~~<sup>fifth</sup> Verse of the Sūrah of Muḥammad, "strike off their heads till you have made a great slaughter among them, and of the rest make fast the fetters". "Wage war," advises the 124th Verse of the Sūrah of Immunity, "against such of the infidels as are your neighbours, and let them find you vigorous".<sup>1</sup>

But any emphasis on the importance and necessity of jihād should be accompanied with two significant qualifications, both of a historical nature. Firstly, even at the height of Islamic expansionism, as will be noted in the chapter on neutrality, a kind of de facto peace was recognised by the Muslim leaders between the Muslim territory (dār al islām) and several countries outside its confines; this was either because Islam voluntarily refrained from attacking them "in deference to their benevolent attitude towards the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions or because of their inaccessibility, as immune from the jihād".<sup>2</sup> Secondly, and perhaps because of the above mentioned considerations, the Koran also contains verses which might be construed as contradictory to those

---

<sup>1</sup>See also the Koran II, 214-15, IX, 5, 6 and 9.

<sup>2</sup>Majid Khadduri, War and Peace in Islam, The Johns Hopkin Press, Baltimore, 1955, p. 252.

on the necessity of jihād. Contradiction of this kind is one of the main problems in understanding and implementing the Koranic injunctions. This difficulty exists in the case of other holy books as well, but the more so as regards the Koran because of the insertion therein of a large number of instructions on a multitude of practical and doctrinal issues. Whatever attempts are made by the religious doctors and commentators at solving these contradictions the choice between the alternatives is still an open one. It is evident that the preference of either of these alternatives over the other is established only by historical tradition and the attitudes adopted by the most powerful and influential Islamic leaders. This, however, does not invalidate the case of the followers of the rival course of action who, by invoking the equally valid Koranic verses on the necessity of that course, try to expose the aberration of their opponents.

A similar pattern presents itself in respect of all doctrinal disputes over the idea of jihād. But being an issue directly connected with the status and power of the Islamic countries, as compared with countries of the enemy territory (dār al harb), jihād involves the additional problem of Islam's position in the world of power politics, thus bringing the element of international relations into its pattern. That is why the militant spirit of Islam has always been made commensurate in intensity with the potentialities of the leading Muslim powers, whether Arab or otherwise. The spirit was at its height at the time of the First Four Caliphs (632-661 A.D.) and the earlier part of the Abbasid period (729-847 A.D.), petered out into independent states after the disintegration of

the Caliphate in the thirteenth century, emerged with increased vigour during the period of the Ottoman Empire (1517-1918) to be seized upon by the Arab nationalists in the course of the First World War in a bid to secure Arab emancipation and statehood.

Perhaps the most outstanding exponent of jihād towards the end of the nineteenth century was Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī. In view of his immense influence on all the modern exponents of jihād we quote here only an extract of one of his articles on this subject.

In discussing the difference between Christianity and Islam, Afghānī lays special emphasis on this militant mood of Islam:

"The Muslim religion is based on a quest for victory and might, iftitah and glory, and on rejecting everything which runs counter to the canon law (sharī'ah)... Whoever studies the principles of this religion and reads the Koran, will undoubtedly give the verdict that the followers of Islam constitute the first military (harbiyah) nation in the world and that they lead all peoples in the invention of weapons and perfection of military science... Whoever meditates over the ayah: 'And make ready then against them what force ye can' will feel sure that he who believes in Islam, believes in the love of conquest and in the quest for every means which might render smooth his way to victory ... Whoever considers that the sharī'ah has forbidden all kinds of wagering, except (in) (horse) race (sibq) and marksmanship (rimayah) will discover the extent to which the lawgiver has been interested in the science of military techniques and their practice."

This "bellicose" spirit was considerably toned down after the creation of independent Arab and other Muslim states; the idea of jihād

---

<sup>1</sup>'urwat' al wuthqā, pp. 25, 28-29.

underwent radical changes and came to be interpreted by modern Islami apologists in terms of the spiritual, peaceful life.

Among others, Syed Ameer Ali deserves special mention. In his impressive, apologetic work The Spirit of Islam, mainly devoted to replying to the Western criticisms of Islam, he analyses the meaning of jihād in this context, describing the circumstances which forced Muḥammad, unlike Christ, to resort to the idea of fighting the infidels. He says that, contrary to Jesus who, during his short ministry, exerted influence over a small body of followers Muḥammad had to address his teachings to an ever-increasing number of followers "among a nation steeped in barbarous usages" and looking upon war as an object of life.

From the moment he accepted the asylum offered to him by the inhabitants of only one town - Medina - in a hostile land, from the moment "he was called upon to become their chief magistrate as well as their spiritual leader, his fate became involved in theirs; from that time the hostilities of idolaters and their allies required an unsleeping vigilance on the part of the Muslims. A single city had to make headway against the combined attacks of multitudinous tribes of Arabia. Under these circumstances energetic measures were often necessary to sustain the existence of the Muslim commonwealth. When persuasion failed, pressure was required." Ameer Ali thus regards the idea of jihād as a means of consolidating and justifying the early Muslims' instinct of self-preservation. Once the Arab tribes were united under the banner of Islam and peace was established among them, Muḥammad proceeded to im-

press upon them "habits of self-control and self-denial such as have never before been revealed in the pages of history". Henceforward Ameer tries to bring into relief the Islamic injunctions on toleration and give prominence to those Koranic āyats (verses) which call upon the Muslims to resort to the sword only in self-defence.<sup>1</sup> He supports his arguments on this point by demonstrating that all Muḥammad's wars with foreign states, as well as with surrounding idolatrous tribes, were imposed upon him because of the aggressive attitudes of the adversaries.

Whatever the reason for the Islamic injunctions on jihād the fact remains that it has inspired in the minds of the Arabs and some other Muslim peoples a kind of religious respect for men of the military profession and warriors.

---

<sup>1</sup>The writer mentions the following āyats in support of his arguments: "It shall be an expiation with God when one shall drop his right of retaliation." "He who shall mediate between men for a good purpose shall be the gainer thereby, but the mediator for evil shall reap the fruit of his doing." (iv, 85.) "Let there be no compulsion in religion." (ii, 257.) "If thy Lord had pleased, verily all who are in the world would have believed together. Wilt thou then force men to believe when belief can come only from God? Adhere to those who foresake you; speak truth to your own heart; do good to everyone that does ill to you." (ii, 257.) "And fight for religion of God against those who fight against you; but transgress not (by attacking them first), for God loveth not the aggressors .... and if they attack you, slay them; but if they desist, let there be no hostility, except against the ungodly." (ii, 186). (See Ameer Ali, The Spirit of Islam, Christophers, London, 1922, pp. 204-221.) It is noteworthy that Ameer Ali does not make any reference to the Koranic verses mentioned at the beginning of this chapter on the necessity of jihād and the way to treat the infidels.



It is to be recalled that the Prophet Muhammad and a great number of the subsequent leaders of the Muslim community, especially the First Four Caliphs (Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Uthmān, 'Alī), and many others were also eminent military figures who often personally took part in the field of battle and this provided further justification for the high status of militarymen and the dignity of their profession in Islam.

The term in Arabic literature approximately corresponding to chivalry in the Western culture is furūsiyah, or horsemanship (from faras, horse), which has always been regarded as one of the magnificent, manly qualities of a proper Muslim. Strictly speaking, furūsiyah denotes an aptitude for carrying out military functions. But the range and nature of the qualities which have often been associated with furūsiyah suffice to bear out its high place in the hierarchy of human virtues as viewed by the Muslims. These qualities are: "bodily strength, correctness of knowledge, depth of intelligence, tenderness of feelings, purity of soul, skill of action, confidence in moments of distress, modesty in affluence, reliance on the Creator and service to the people".<sup>1</sup> "Islam," writes a lecturer at al Azhar, Ahmad ash Sharabāṣī, "has paid ample attention to furūsiyah. It has encouraged its sons to learn swimming, shooting, riding and other kinds of sport ... the Prophet, may the blessing of God be upon him, himself took part in all these trainings".<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, December, 1956, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 440.

## V Resuscitation of the Idea of Jihād

In concert with the rising prestige of the military class in the Arab countries as described above a spectacular revival of the idea of jihād and of the pristine spirit of militancy has taken place among the Arab/Muslim clergy and other religious circles. That this revival has been only a reaction to the growing pressure of the Western Powers should be evident to every student of the post-war history of the Arab countries; but what is new and interesting is the way and the tempo in which this revival has taken place.

We shall therefore study here some of the typical responses of religious circles to Western pressure on the Arab countries in recent times.

Sporadic manifestations of the revival of the idea of jihād in its most belligerent form can be especially considered in majallat 'al Azhar as early as 1953, when the Egyptian army had just set about strengthening its hold over the country and the Western attitude was showing signs of stiffening. The best example of these preliminary outbursts is perhaps an article by 'Abdul Maḥmūd Maslūt, a solicitor and a contributor to majallah, entitled "The Muslims in Divergent Ways". The article, couched in<sup>a</sup> highly rhetorical language, tries to analyse the causes of the Arabs' weakness and humility.<sup>1</sup> These causes are, as one might well

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah. January, 1953, pp. 584-587. It is indicative of the writer's single-minded concern for the Arabs that, although he uses the word "Muslims" in the title of his article, he does not make any reference in the article itself to other Muslim peoples and their hardships. For a review meant to be concerned with the problems of the whole of the Muslim world such parochial lines of policy do not seem edifying.

predict, "weakness of faith, slackening of determination, indulgence in worldly affairs and divergence from God".<sup>1</sup>

The remedy he recommends is unity and firmness in dealing with the Imperialists.

"One should not," he says, "address these people (Imperialists) in the name of world peace, not interstate security nor laws for which they plead, because these words do not bear any weight with them, and are not appreciated in their societies. One should not address them in the name of human sentiments and mercy which reside in every individual's soul, emptied as the imperialists' hearts are of sentiment...."<sup>2</sup>

The writer's conclusions from all this is that:

"The only logic they (Imperialists) understand and the only language of which they are afraid are the logic and language of force and determined resistance, which would brook no flagging and slackening."<sup>3</sup>

An article by Muhammad 'Abdul Laṭīf as Subkī, member of the Council of Senior 'ulama', in the October 1952 issue of majallah is also worth mentioning. Under the heading "The Religion and Force - Two Ways of Achieving the Same End" Subkī seeks to justify resort to force as just another way of realizing the sublime ideals of Islam. The article assumes a special significance in the light of the developments leading to the Egyptian Army coup of July 1952. Subkī starts his

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, January 1953, p. 586.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 587.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

article by analysing the functions of religion (i.e. Islam) which, as he says, are mainly characterised by "peaceful persuasion".<sup>1</sup> The ultimate aim of religion is to protect the individual from the scourge of defection and the society from crimes which threaten its existence and undermine its stability.

But, continues Subkī, he who created human beings did not want all of them to be of the same nature. He did not want to confer the blessings of his guidance on all individuals. Hence the inability of religion in correcting defectors and subduing criminals. Here becomes evident the need of religion for material force "represented by the army, to punish the renegades and bring them back to the fold, and to make the deaf ears listen to the call of salvation". To substantiate his view the writer then quotes from an unnamed Arab poet a verse which reflects a pessimistic conception of human nature ~~of human nature~~; "Individuals (or souls) do not abstain from aberration unless there is something for them to be afraid of."<sup>2</sup> It was for this reason that Islam has based its mission on both persuasion and force, and it was for this reason that its followers succeeded in defeating their enemies and achieving mastery. But the force which should be used together with religious persuasion is not something crude and harsh; it is in fact "polished by religion, and nurtured by its spirit, humanity and refinement".<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> majallah, October, 1952, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., January, 1953, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Perhaps the most bellicose interpretation ever made by the Azharites of the idea of jihād was effected immediately after the Anglo-Franco-Israeli operations against Egypt in October 1956. Al Azhar's reaction in this respect was not only in the form of psychological warfare. Soon after the operations a vigorous programme of military training was put in hand at the centre itself for the first time in its history.<sup>1</sup>

But more important were the exhortations of the leading theorists of majallah to meet violence with violence and their emphatic recommendations for the military preparedness of the faithful at all times. One can find sometimes among these exhortations and recommendations phrases in admiration of war and its alleged blessings. Under the heading "The Military Training in the Schooling Programme at al Azhar and Religious Schools" 'Abbās Ṭahā tries to justify wars - with the familiar necessary qualifications - by making extensive quotations from famous Western philosophers and writers. "The mental and moral factors," he says, "which become dominant during wartime, lead to the progress of the society as a whole".<sup>2</sup> The writer considers war as a natural outcome of the efforts of every nation to promote its beliefs and principles in opposition to another nation.

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. majallah, January 1957, p. 602; February 1957, pp. 682-684; March 1957, pp. 790-791.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., February 1957, p. 682.

"Struggle," he continues, "is, then, a universal law of nature. The man has been created belligerent. War is more effective than peace in fostering a life of merit; in fact it widens the field of (individuals') merits more than any other factor known in history."

Peace and prosperity result in the prevalence of "base personal desires, and weak, unhealthy intentions".<sup>1</sup> As noted above, the writer tries to buttress his case by quoting such Western figures as Schiller, Frederic the Great and Treitschke on the benefits of war. The very fact of quoting these men is significant as majallah rarely establishes the rightness of a policy by drawing upon the writings of Western sources. A few words, however, seem to be due on the "militaristic" outlook of those Western thinkers whose names have appeared in Ṭāhā's article.

First of all, Schiller can hardly be regarded as an admirer of force - especially for patriotic aims. He, in fact, never paid any special attention to national themes. "What concerned him," says Kohn, "in all themes was their humanity, their human interest, the progress of mankind represented by them, to what ever century or nation they might belong".<sup>2</sup> Frederic's "bellicose" spirit is especially manifest in his views on the necessity of maintaining "the integrity of all the State's provinces". A small work cast in the form of letters between Anapistemon and Philopatros, written by Frederick himself, illustrates these views. "Do you not see," asks Philopatros, "that if the government were to lose all these

---

<sup>1</sup>majallah, February 1957, p. 683.

<sup>2</sup>The Idea of Nationalism, p. 409.

provinces, it would thereby become enfeebled, and losing consequently the resources it had drawn from them, would be less able to help you in case of need".<sup>1</sup> Finally, Heinrich von Treitschke's militarism was motivated by his desire to see Alsace and Lorraine restored to Germany. "These provinces," he said, "are ours by the right of the sword."<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to Ṭāhā, who views the necessity of jihād from a purely social angle and seeks the assistance of Western thinkers in establishing it, Muḥibb ad Dīn al Khaṭīb, the editor-in-chief of al-Jalāl, treats the subject merely as an Islamic precept. He analyses briefly the history of jihād in Islam but, contrary to Ameer Ali, propounds the idea not as a passive concept of self-defence but rather as an active injunction aiming at promoting the cause of God and subduing the enemies of Islam. As illustrations we could quote his attitude to Jewry:

"The sahīh (Collection of Prophetic Traditions) by Bukhari quotes the Prophet through 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar ibn Khaṭṭab (the Second Caliph) as saying that: 'Kill the Jews, until one of them hides behind a rock, and the rock says: "O Servant of God, there is a Jew behind me, kill him!"' Or: 'Abu Imāmah quotes the Prophet in masnad by Imam al Aḥmad to the effect that: "One branch of my umma will always manifest their religion and dominate their enemies and no one will be able to harm them by opposing them..." The people asked: "O Prophet of God, where are these people?" The Prophet answered: "In Jerusalem, and around Jerusalem!"

It is significant to note that Khaṭīb makes these quotations in a fragment

---

<sup>1</sup>Kedourie, op.cit., pp. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup>Kohn, op.cit., p. 582.

entitled "The jihad of Palestine". The article contains other quotations, either from authoritative books of prophetic traditions or other great Islamic leaders of the past, enumerating the blessings accrued on those who get killed for the cause of jihad, even if they have not carried out other religious duties:

"When God ordered his Prophet," he continued, "O Prophet encourage the faithful to fight (in such a way that) if there be twenty patient (faithful men) they can defeat two hundred infidels, and if there be one hundred of them, they can defeat a thousand of the infidels, he meant that the faithful should possess such qualities as would entitle them to that victory .... (these qualities are:) military education, self-sacrifice, firmness in jihad and attachment to the Islamic principle of furūsiyah...."<sup>1</sup>

## VI Conclusions

As a result of all the above social and doctrinal factors the army in most of the Arab countries is now regarded as the real source of power, as it is only with its awe and strength that all obstacles standing in the way of economic, social and political emancipation of the people can be crushed and foreign plots can be foiled.

---

<sup>1</sup> Almajallah, November 1956, pp. 391-401. It is to be noted also that during the period in question Almajallah, as if in an endeavour to stress the militant spirit of Islam, published an increasing number of articles on ghazawāt (wars fought by the Prophet Muhammad against the infidels) and on the lives and activities of prominent Islamic military leaders in the past. See, inter alia, articles on the ghazwah of Badr al Kubrā (October, 1953, pp. 149-153), ghazwah of Quainuqa' (January 1954, pp. 573-576), ghazwah of Uhud (April 1954, pp. 960-963, May 1954, pp. 1074-1078), 'Uqbat' ibn Nafi' (April 1955, pp. 877-881.)



The army is also recognized in the minds of all progressive Arab nationalists as the sole arbiter of politics. This recognition has been conceded even by those Arab authors who wish to see the concepts of Western democracy introduced into their countries. The army's misdeeds are now passed over in silence and its coups are praised as shocks which awaken people to the realities of political life.

Among others, Ahmad Shaibānī, to whom we referred in Chapter Three, deserves special mention. In his book, al usus ath thawra'iyah li'l qawmiyat 'al 'arabiyyah, he first emphasizes the need to provide the Syrian people with all manner of opportunity for exercising control over officialdom to fill up the vacuum occurring as a result of the disappearance of the mukhadrams, but then proceeds to state that:

"The deviation of the government or parliament from a progressive policy at home and a humanitarian policy abroad provides an exception to this fundamental rule. In such a contingency it is incumbent on Arab nationalists to seek the assistance of the army as a revolutionary body to rectify the deviation or prevent its occurrence."<sup>1</sup>

Then, certainly to the surprise of any believer in democratic principles, the author enumerates the cases in which the army should take over in any Arab country. These cases are:

- (a) When the (civil) government concludes a peace treaty with Israel.
- (b) When the government or parliament refuses to

---

<sup>1</sup>Shaibānī, op.cit., p. 64.

conclude non-conditional economic agreements with foreign powers in accord or discord with the Arabs' attitude.

- (c) When deflection is made from the policy of positive neutrality.
- (d) When the government or parliament compromises over issues connected with the liberation of an Arab country to secure personal or parochial (quṭriyah) gains.<sup>1</sup>

It is self-evident that cases of this kind arise only in those Arab countries which, according to the author's standards, are governed by Arab nationalists. Shaibānī does not say anything in this context about those Arab countries which are still, directly or indirectly, under foreign domination. But the reader can well infer that, in such countries, the case is far stronger for the army to oust the suborned governments. Elsewhere in the book Shaibānī confirms this inference by stating his belief in the two kinds of revolution:

"One accomplished by the people and the other carried out by the army in the name of the people."<sup>2</sup>

The sentence can be revealing of the extent to which the faith in the saving mission of the army has become part of Arab nationalistic creed.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Shaibānī, op.cit., p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>See also Berger, op.cit., p. 20; Lerner, op.cit., p. 247.

The Western counterpart to this Arab conception of the army as at once the spokesman and saviour of the nation can be found again in the "modern Caesarism" of the German nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century, who, although recognizing popular sovereignty, "insisted that it be exercised by a single individual".<sup>1</sup> They believed that this "compromise would enable Kaiser to combine democracy and authority, and provide Germany with a dictator embodying the national will for an industrial future."<sup>2</sup>

---

Militarism in the Arab countries, as in many countries of the West (France) and East (Pakistan, Turkey, etc.) is an attempt at finding a short cut to solving the great social and political problems of these countries. It might therefore be regarded as a temporary arrangement likely to give place to civil authority once those problems are solved. But, unlike its counterparts in the West and East, Arab militarism has solid historical and religious bases which, as was shown in this chapter, have been consolidated under the impact of the West. Militarism has thus become an idealized image of the heroic struggle for survival and restoring ancient Arab glory. As such, even with the solution of the social and political problems which have occasioned its upsurge, it is likely to persist for an indefinite period.

---

<sup>1</sup>Shanahan, op.cit., p. 389.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

## Chapter Six

### NEUTRALITY

Our study hitherto can be said to have established at least one fact, which is that the Arabs should, and must, be the last people in the world to go neutral. As will be seen in this chapter not only are their Islamic traditions in contradiction to neutrality as a principle in international relations but, as has also been pointed out previously, their present struggle for unity, with its strong anti-Western overtones, often reduces their neutral status to sheer absurdity. Despite this, neutrality is today one of the declared principles of Arab nationalism.

The following chapter tries to elucidate each of the above points. We start by demonstrating the contradiction between Islam and neutrality and then proceed to an analysis of the reasons why the Arabs have adopted neutrality in their foreign policy. This will be done by criticising the political relations between the Arabs and the West. The chapter thus brings our study, which started in the nebular stratum of lofty ideas and doctrines, down to the tangible world of routine interests and conflicts.

---

Neutrality, both as an ideology and a strategy in international relations, is alien to the spirit of Islam - for two main reasons. Quite

apart from the militant character of Islam, as discussed in the previous chapter, the special mission assigned by the Koran to the Muslims or, as some Arab commentators point out,<sup>1</sup> assigned to the Arabs - that of "repairing and constructing the world into a monistic order"<sup>2</sup> - definitely contradicts neutrality. How can a people, who have been destined by God to be "central" so that they "may be witness for mankind",<sup>3</sup> keep away from taking part in international disputes, whether these may be of concern to them or not? As a religion which seeks to administer the worldly affairs of Man, in addition to securing his salvation, Islam has made it incumbent on every Muslim to enjoin others to do good and abstain from evil (amr bi'l ma'ruf wa nahy 'an al munkar). Therefore, Muslims are bound to consider such passive concepts as neutrality - in politics as well as in other branches of social life - as devices to be applied only sparingly and in exceptional circumstances, and not as permanent guiding principles. Neutrality, as a negative political status, is rather in line with the teachings of Christianity which does not concern itself with politics.

Islam aims at universality, at establishing and implementing the divine rules all over the world. To achieve this aim it constantly de-

---

<sup>1</sup> Darawzah, al wahdat 'al 'arabiyyah, p. 111. - 'Aflaq, fi sabil al ba'th, p. 42 et seq., V. supra, pp. 10, 217 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Majed Khadduri, op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> The Koran, 11, 137.

clares war against unbelievers. In Islamic theory the world is divided, as was noted before, into dār al islām, or Muslim territory, and dār al harb, or infidel territory. No intermediate status has been conceded by the orthodox Muslims, although the Shāfi'īs have challenged this uncompromising dualism by discerning a third status, dār al 'ahd or dār as sulh, i.e. the territory at peace with Islam. War against the infidels should go on until the dār al Islām comprises the whole world and swamps the dār al harb. It seems evident that all these offensive and militant ideals, with their legal and political implications, are incompatible with that spirit of passivity and resignation in respect of certain international problems which is the essence of neutrality. The point has been perhaps best described by Majid Khadduri:

"The universal nomocracy of Islam, like the Republica Christiana in the West, assumed that mankind constituted one supra-national community, bound by one law and governed by one ruler. For it was held, as stated in a Qur'anic injunction, that 'if there were two gods, the universe would be ruined'. The nature of such a state is the co-existence of a second universal state. While Islam tolerated Christianity and Judaism as religions, Islamdom and Christendom, as two universal states, could not peacefully exist...."<sup>1</sup>

If neutrality is taken to mean the attitude of a state which voluntarily desires to keep out of war by not taking sides, no such status is recognised in Islamic legal theory. For Islam must ipso jure be at war with any state which refuses "to come to terms with it either

---

<sup>1</sup> Majid Khadduri, op.cit., p. 17.

by submitting to Muslim rule or by accepting a temporary peace arrangement."<sup>1</sup>

For such reasons neutrality does not seem to have achieved a dignified status either in the works of the Muslim thinkers or in the reported maxims of the great Islamic leaders. It is also of special significance that the word neutrality, or hiyād, as a political term, does not appear in the Koran.

Neutrality, of course, was imposed on the Muslims as a principle after the eclipse of their glory and power and the Christian West, expanding its political, military and economic domination over the globe and growing in all the fields of material strength, presented a formidable challenge to the basic principles of Islam. In view of their weakness the Muslims had two courses before them: (a) to ignore the challenge, or (b) to take it up partially and to respond to it only in those fields where they were best fitted. But during the period of Arab eclipse from the fall of Baghdad (in 1258) up to Sharif Husain's revolt (1916) neither of these two courses led to the formulation of any theory or doctrine in defence of neutrality, and the Muslim powers stood aloof from international disputes and politics for centuries without feeling any need to justify their status.

During the First World War national aspiration and political expedi-

---

<sup>1</sup>Majid Khadduri, op.cit., p. 51.

ency provided an occasion for the Arabs to revert to the old spirit of 'partisanship'. They often justified their 1916 Revolt by invoking the idea of jihād in its most bellicose form.<sup>1</sup>

The same spirit was prevalent in the initial phases of the Second World War, when there was a growing sympathy with Germany, expressed both at official (Iraq and Egypt) and popular levels.<sup>2</sup> This time the reason for 'partisanship' was not political expediency, but a frustrated indignation against what has come to be known as the British betrayal of the Arabs' hopes of unity.

How is it that, with such powerful doctrinal and historical traditions opposed to neutrality, Arab nationalists today, almost unanimously, regard neutrality as one of their essential articles of faith?

The answer is inevitably connected with the Arab relations with the West and particularly with the Western Powers most interested in the Middle East - that is Britain and the United States. As we shall see, the Arabs have adopted neutrality as a reaction to a series of Western political moves which we will attempt to analyse below. As the Arab writers, in their disquisitions on neutrality, have so often addressed themselves to these two powers, a survey of the roots of the present tension is therefore essential in order to judge the merits and demerits of Arab neutrality.

---

<sup>1</sup>Antonius, op.cit., p. 207.

<sup>2</sup>Husaini, The Moslem Brethren, pp. 16, 64. Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, pp. 34-35, 42-43.



We have seen that tension in Arab-West relations is caused partly by a series of fundamental disparities and resultant clashes in the realm of doctrine and ideology. But it is also partly caused by certain political and economic factors which, contrary to the ideological and doctrinal ones, constantly change in their scope and intensity. Discussion will go on for a long time between scholars and political analysts as to whether the clashes on the political and economic levels are occasioned by ideological divergencies or whether the latter are in fact symptoms and effects of the former. Our task here, however, is not so much to determine the order of priority of causes as to understand the causes themselves.

Whereas the doctrinal and ideological roots of the Arab-West conflicts have not received due consideration on the part of Western scholars, ~~they have studied~~ <sup>have been studied</sup> the political and economic causes/most exhaustively. Hence we shall not treat of the political side in great detail, and we shall completely omit the economic angle. After all, in our view, in the Middle East economics has been an instrument of politics. Only the policies of the two Western Powers, Britain and the United States, call for our criticism in this context since the influence of Western Germany and Italy is only commercial and that of France has considerably waned.

#### 1. Britain.

Britain's relations with the Arabs since the Second World War have been bedevilled by a lack of confidence. British policies during

and between, the two world wars and at the time of the creation of the State of Israel have been mainly responsible for this. Even when there has not been any major economic and political dispute outstanding between Britain and the Arabs, memories of past discords and misdeeds have continued to poison their relationship - whereas in Arab-American relations the Arabs have always been ready to forgive and forget once a dispute has been settled or a hostile policy has receded into past history. It would be relevant at this juncture to cast a cursory glance at the Arab grievances against the British from the First World War up to the creation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955.

First there was what has come to be known by the Arabs as "The Great Betrayal", namely, Britain's failure to fulfil her undertaking during the First World War to help promote the independence of the Arab peoples,<sup>1</sup> and her connivance at the growing wave of Jewish immigration into Palestine. Whatever construction the British commentators may put on the Sharif-McMahon correspondence of July 1916 the fact cannot be denied that Britain's refusal to contribute to the realisation of Arab independence after the War could not but induce the Arabs to regard Britain as a power "swearing falsely in making covenants".<sup>2</sup> On the whole, the general Arab reaction to Britain's policy at that time could still be defined as one of bitter disappointment.<sup>3</sup> But the British oppressive

---

<sup>1</sup>Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, pp. 24, 215 et seq.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

policies in Palestine (especially during the 1936-1939 revolt) helped to turn this bitter disappointment into hatred.

Then came the Second World War with Britain's determination to impose her will on the Arab peoples in the name of the crusade against Nazism. The Arabs have often been criticised for their pro-Fascist sentiments and attitudes during the Second World War. But have the critics paid due attention to the real cause of these sentiments and attitudes? The fact cannot be denied that the British efforts to set up friendly governments in Egypt and Iraq during the first stages of the War against the will of the people of these countries could not but induce the Arabs to mistrust any altruistic motive behind Britain's war efforts. Explaining the difficulties in the way of Anglo-American co-operation during the Second World War, the former American Minister in the Middle East, Mr. J. M. Landis, writes that the British action of imposing her own Prime Minister on Egypt "at the point of bayonet or rather the tank" and the suppressive measures adopted towards the pro-Nazi elements in Iran, Iraq and Egypt "seemed to flaunt the very principles of the Great Charter which at the same time their and our propagandists were shouting from the house-tops."<sup>1</sup>

For an ordinary Arab with a slight knowledge of international affairs it seemed incomprehensible that the British could afford to tolerate a near-Nazi Eire on the threshold of their home, but could not re-

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Mohammad Shafi Agvani's The United States and the Arab World, Institute of Islamic Studies, Moslim University, Aligarh, 1955, p.107.

spect the wishes of the peoples of far-off lands. The combined effect of all these developments was the complete loss of Arab faith in British sincerity and integrity. And, for that same Arab, the British policies following the Second World War helped to strengthen this background of mistrust and suspicion. Quite apart from the British attitude immediately before and at the time of the creation of the State of <sup>1</sup>Israel, the adverse effect of which on British-Arab relations is almost universally conceded by British critics,<sup>1</sup> her rigidity towards Egypt (over the Suez Canal) - not to speak of her less important disputes with Saudi Arabia and the Yemen - and her unflagging support of unpopular and corrupt governments in the Middle East occasioned the emergence of extremist movements in the area to the detriment of the West as a whole. In these circumstances it was evident that, unless the atmosphere of mistrust and hostility was removed, any British measure to secure the friendship of the Arabs, however well motivated and skilfully launched, was bound to create the opposite effect.

At this juncture two events may have caused the British to think that Arab hostility had started to subside and that therefore conditions

---

<sup>1</sup>"At the end of the Second World War," writes Glubb Pasha, "Britain was most anxious to retain Arab friendship. She no longer had any desire to exercise direct rule, though she attached great importance to the corridor to the Indian Ocean. Before, however, she could be secure in such friendship, she had two principal problems to solve - that of the future of Palestine and that of her relations with Egypt. She was to fail to solve either, and she was to lose her position in the Middle East as a result." (Glubb Pasha, Britain and the Arabs, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1959, pp. 273-4.)

existed for a successful British diplomatic offensive in the Middle East. They were the end of the Persian oil crisis in August 1954 and the conclusion of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement in the same year. Both these results were secured after protracted and arduous negotiations.

But the policy chosen by the British Foreign Office to exploit these developments did nothing to strengthen the British position. It only succeeded in intensifying the existing rivalries and resentments in the Middle East. This policy was manifested by the Baghdad Pact, a treaty concluded in February 1955 in the name of "regional arrangement" with the participation of Pakistan, Persia, Iraq, Turkey and Britain.<sup>1</sup> In this policy the British and American Governments were defeating their own ends - or so it seemed to the Arabs. Apparently the aim of the British (and American) diplomacy was that the peoples of the Middle East should set up a defence organization, presumably of their own choice and initiative, to meet the growing threat of Communism both internally and externally. The means adopted to execute this aim looked like active British (and American) involvement.

Even worse was the British encouragement of Iraq to take the lead in this organization. For two reasons this policy of the British Government was mistaken. In the first place, the long-standing and striking unpopularity of the man then heading the Iraqi Government, i.e. Nūrī as Sa'īd, with the Arab nationalists and anti-Western forces; and then Egypt's rivalry with Iraq for the leadership of the Arab world, especially since the officers' Revolution in 1952. In 1953<sup>5</sup> it did not need any

---

<sup>1</sup>See The Baghdad Pact, origins and political setting, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, February 1956, especially pp. 6-7.

genius of prediction to say that the existence of Nūrī's Iraq at the head of the Baghdad Pact would provoke, as it did, a revolutionary Egyptian Government into strident opposition - if only for psychological and personal reasons of rivalry. These two reasons were more dominant in the minds of Arab nationalists, especially the Egyptian and Syrian, than the reason usually mentioned by some Western commentators to the effect that the anti-communist and alarmist terms in which the creation of the Pact was justified frightened the Arabs, who allegedly wanted to play off the great powers against each other.<sup>1</sup>

Thus by the mid-fifties Britain's insistence on pursuing the policy of "regional arrangements" in the face of fierce Arab opposition had turned the edifice of Arab-British friendship into a ruined fort. We will discuss Arab reaction to this development after surveying the policy of the United States towards the Arabs in the course of the same period.

## II The United States

There were times when the United States of America, as a Great Power, was in an almost ideal position to win the friendship of the nascent Arab states and, at the same time, to further American economic and political interests in the whole of the Middle East. Contrary to other Western powers the United States was not associated, in the minds of the Arabs, with the betrayals of promises for the establishment of an independent Arab State after the First World War, nor did it incur the

---

<sup>1</sup>"The Middle East Since Suez" in The World Today, December 1957, p. 500 et seq.

odium of colonialistic oppression. Far from this, the Americans could claim to have rendered considerable contributions to the promotion of Arab culture and education and, thereby, to the emergence of Arab nationalism towards the close of the nineteenth century. The American Presbyterian missionaries from 1820 onwards were always remembered as being distinguished from all former and contemporaneous missionaries by their efforts to revive Arabic literature and tradition. They established a printing press in Beirut, set up thirty-three schools in various parts of Syria and engendered the intellectual atmosphere in the Levant which should be regarded as responsible for the first nationalist stirrings among the Arabs. Two of the most outstanding representatives of Arab intelligentsia at that time, i.e. Nāṣif Yazīfī and Butrus al-Dustānī, closely co-operated with the missionaries and in 1847 founded "The Society of Arts and Science" which, as we saw in Chapter Three, later on helped to create the Syrian Scientific Society.<sup>1</sup>

The popularity of the Americans with the Arab peoples up to the end of the second decade of the present century can be gauged from the warmth and enthusiasm with which most of their leaders welcomed American involvement in the Middle Eastern affairs after the First World War.<sup>2</sup> Clause four of the resolution of the General Syrian Congress, adopted on

---

<sup>1</sup> Agwani, op.cit., pp. 19-21. E. A. Speiser, The United States and the Near East, Harvard University Press, 1950, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, p. 220.

July 2nd, 1919, stated that:

"We rely on President Wilson's declarations that his object in entering the War was to put an end to acquisitive designs for imperialistic purposes. In our desire that our country should not be made a field for colonization and in the belief that the American nation is devoid of colonial ambitions and has no political designs on our country, we resolve to seek assistance in the technical and economic fields from the United States of America on the understanding that the duration of such aid should not exceed twenty years."

Clause 10 expressed the hope that:

"We may look to President Wilson and the liberal American nation, who are known for their sincere and generous sympathy with the aspirations of the weak nations, for help in the fulfilment of our hopes."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that between the two World Wars the United States had no territorial interest in the area was also in itself a great asset. It is interesting to note that the United States' direct contribution to the establishing of the state of Israel in 1949, although deprecated with great vehemence by all Arabs, did not wholly vitiate the prospects of Arab-American co-operation and friendship as it did in the case of the British and French. The Arabs soon buried past memories. There were two reasons for this attitude of the Arabs. Firstly, the American involvement in the creation of Israel at least had the virtue of sincerity. The Americans had made no specific promises to the Arabs that might imply their opposition to the emergence of a Jewish state.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, con-

---

<sup>1</sup>Antonius, op.cit., p. 441. Speiser, op.cit., p. 239.

<sup>2</sup>On the contrary, the United States interest in and commitment to the development of 'the Jewish National Home' in Palestine were unmistakable. As early as 1937 the United States Government was exerting pressure on



trary to Great Britain, which had lost, or was in the process of losing, her status as a Great Power, the United States represented an ever-growing power, ready to aid the under-developed countries in their efforts for economic progress. Growing American interest in the Arab world was "dramatically illustrated by the fact that President Roosevelt, in February 1945 - barely two months before his death - went out of his way to meet with Arab leaders in the vicinity of Suez."<sup>1</sup>

In such circumstances what should have been the correct basic principles of American policy towards the Arabs? Answers to this question might be as multiple as they are contradictory. Among these answers, however, there is one which can be of immense interest for us. It comes from a man whose policies towards the Arabs, especially during the latter part of the 'fifties, formed one of the main factors responsible for the deterioration of Arab-West relations: John Foster Dulles. We cannot help being astonished to find that Dulles' answer, which was

---

(cont.)

Britain, to secure uninterrupted Jewish immigration into Palestine. After the Second World War, the United States openly adopted a pro-Zionist policy necessitated by the fate of the Jews in Europe and the transfer of Zionist leadership to American Jewry. In the presidential election of 1948 the Republicans and Democrats were vying with each other in expressing support for the opening of Palestine to "(the Jews) unrestricted immigration and land-ownership" (The Times, 30 June 1944). The United States also did a great deal to influence the deliberations at Lake Success in 1947 and 1948 in favour of the Zionists. An opposite view, however, has been expressed in E. A. Speiser's The United States and the Near East, pp. 223-224.

<sup>1</sup>Speiser, op.cit., pp. 107, 242.

given before he became Secretary of State, was almost identical with what the Arab nationalists themselves expected. His answer does not refer only to the Arabs, but is concerned with the whole of Asia.

"Any policies regarding Asia and Pacific," he said, "must be a logical development of the policy of peaceful evolution to national independence. They should re-inforce, not undermine, the independence of the new nations. That independence has been newly achieved, and while the Western colonial powers may feel that they acted promptly and generously, those who have won political freedom feel that the action came only grudgingly and under pressure. These people are, and for some time will be, suspicious of the motives of any Western power, including the United States. It will be feared that the West is using the threat of Communism as an excuse to regain political mastery over the liberated peoples. Any Western pressure is bound to react in favour of Communist effort to arouse violent revolt against the present governments. Already we have seen these governments are labelled 'lackeys' of the West. We should give help where we can and where it is wanted, but we must not seek to impose it under unwelcome conditions." "If the Communist parties in Western Europe," concludes Dulles, "feel that they can make political capital by charging the United States with intent to turn these countries into colonies, it is clear that we must be scrupulously careful in our relations, which, within the last five years, have in fact been colonial possessions of the West."<sup>1</sup>

But as soon as Dulles was appointed to office his actual policy was in striking contrast to these fine recommendations. He seemed at times, in the eyes of the Arabs, to display a spirit of harsh avuncularism and to degenerate into the same "colonialistic mentality" as that of the British and the French, although accompanied by less frequent, direct

---

<sup>1</sup> John Foster Dulles, War or Peace, George C. Harrap & Co. Ltd., London, 1950, pp. 224-5.

military intervention. Although for a good part of the fifties most of the governments in the Middle East, whether Arab, Turkish or Persian, were branded as 'lackeys' and 'pampered menials' by their own local nationalist movements the United States Government chose not only to enter into vigorous co-operation with these governments, but often supported them in the face of hostile public opinion. In two notorious cases (Jordan in 1957 and the Lebanon in 1958) it saved such governments from revolt by direct military interference. Economic help, instead of being given "when and where" it was wanted, was more often than not imposed on these countries tied to political conditions, as was disastrously demonstrated in the case of the help for the construction of the Aswan Dam in 1956. Participation in the Baghdad Pact, which was officially sponsored by Britain or her known underlings in the Middle East, such as Nūrī as Sa'īd's Government, again discredited the Americans in the minds of the Arab nationalists. The only bright point in the story was the American refusal to co-operate with the British and French in invading the Suez Canal area in October 1956. The occasion again offered prospects for the establishment of a sound Arab-American friendship in the interests of both. But the proclamation of the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957 immediately blighted these prospects. The Doctrine aroused sharp Arab animosity and failed in its purpose because it was unmistakably directed against Soviet Russia at a time when widespread feelings had been created in the Soviet favour throughout the Middle East, thanks to its support for Egypt in the Anglo-Franco-Israeli invasion of that

country. Moreover, the Doctrine looked like another attempt along the lines of the Baghdad Pact which, after the Suez crisis, had become the target of growing indictment from numerous quarters in the Arab world.

On the whole American policies towards the Arab countries since the Second World War are symptomatic of the ambivalent feelings of their formulators. On the one hand traditional revulsion against colonialism and attempts at forestalling the Russians in winning the friendship of the Middle Eastern nations have prompted the Americans in certain cases to make offers of economic assistance to support, though half-heartedly and indirectly, the struggle of the Arabs against their British and French oppressors, and in others to disassociate themselves definitely from the policies of their Western allies. On the other, fears that the nationalist movements, after dealing with the British or French, would soon turn against them have sometimes tempted them to take a sinister view of these movements.<sup>1</sup>

III The Arab Reaction. Conclusions.

Taken together, the effects of British and American policies have destroyed the old hopes of some Arab nationalists in the United States as an ally, and rendered all the nationalists more suspicious and pessimistic over the motives and aims of Britain. Today, in the eyes of the Arabs, the United States occupies a position

---

<sup>1</sup>For a critical study of the United States' policy towards the Arabs see Speiser, op.cit., p. 242 et seq.

similar to Britain as the main Western predatory, imperialistic power, bent on crushing the national liberation movement in the Arab countries in the interest of the great oil monopolies and other vested interests. Less vociferous critics regard the United States only as an "associate" or "accomplice" of Britain in exploiting and oppressing the Arab nation.<sup>1</sup> The fact that these sombre feelings towards the United States are shared by many other Asian countries, with the significant inclusion of Nehru's India, as well as the Latin American peoples who, as immediate neighbours, are known to be the most competent judges of American policy, have only strengthened the Arabs' sense of the rightness of their anti-Americanism.

What did the Arabs do after experiencing these feelings of betrayal by the British and frustration with the United States? As both the

---

<sup>1</sup>"The United States policy," writes Dr. 'Abdul Malik 'Udah, "is characterised by the support of financial interests, influential circles and investors in their efforts to create zones of influence, acquire sources of raw materials and secure desired markets for the expanding American economy ... (these interests) are aided in their efforts by the Pentagon and the Department of State. Besides, all the proposals for Palestine as well as the Johnston plan are aimed at securing and consolidating American influence." In Dr. 'Udah's opinion, the American defence schemes in the Middle East have so far been motivated by the desire to preserve American financial interests and investment in the Middle East at the expense of the British." (al-muḥadaraṭ, p. 67.). "Following the Second World War," writes another contemporary political analyst, Muḥammad 'Izzah Farawzah, "the United States set about establishing its influence in various Arab countries, raising the banner of leadership of the non-Communist world, whose people like to call it 'the free world', and created (in these countries) centres which, with the passing of time, proved to be imperialistic...." (al-waḥdat al-'arabiyah, op. cit., p. 315.) See also Janbalāḥī, baḥṭhat 'ath-thawrat al-luḥmaniyyah, pp. 63 et seq. 72-77.

Western and Eastern blocs had openly contributed to the creation of a hostile state in their midst, two contradictory, but parallel, tendencies started to develop among Arabs of different political persuasions: firstly, fear of Israeli expansionism prompted them to secure the support, especially military, of one or other of the Great Powers; but, secondly, popular indignation against the involvement of the two rival blocs in the creation of Israel rendered it necessary to avoid any open and formal alignment with either of them. The Arab mind is more apt to entertain contradictory ideas than is any other mind and, since 1948, these two opposing tendencies have found their manifestation in the policies and diplomatic moves of almost all Arab countries.

The first tendency to curry favour with one of the Great Powers resulted, in the period between 1951 and 1956, in two dénouements which, oddly enough, were contrasting: the Baghdad Pact (February 1955) and Egypt's arms deal with Czechoslovakia (June 1955). Whereas the Baghdad Pact marked Iraq's departure from, or rather outright denunciation of, the principle of neutrality, Egypt's move satisfied the urge to secure foreign help without offending the desire for neutrality and, therefore, was consonant with the motives of the post-Palestine Arab nationalism.

As to the second and more important tendency to adopt neutrality, with a precision which is so rare in the case of such social and historical developments, one can trace its inclusion in the Arab nationalists' articles of faith to the Bandung Conference of April 1955.<sup>1</sup> The choice

---

<sup>1</sup> Tahā 'Abdul Baqī Surūr, op. cit., p. 93 et seq.

of that great assemblage of Afro-Asian peoples as a suitable occasion for glorifying the term neutrality was no wanton or fortuitous act.

As we have seen in the foregoing pages, the earlier half of the year 1955 was a period of unprecedented intensification of Western military activities in the Middle East, marked by the creation of the Baghdad Pact in February and evidence of Persia's adherence to it. The main sponsor of these activities was the British Government which, after the settlement of its oil dispute with Persia (August 1954) and the conclusion of the agreement on evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal (October 1954), had set about reconstructing the machinery of its policies in the Middle East. There were developments which portended a considerable measure of success for these British efforts, among which the most important ones were the replacement in Persia of the National Front Government by a pro-Western regime and the <sup>united</sup> Anglo-American policy towards almost all major Middle Eastern problems.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Western analysts and commentators usually overlook or understate the effects of the Persian oil nationalisation movement on the inter-action between American and British policies in the Middle East. It is no close secret that the Americans had a hand in promoting the initial phases of that movement and, as a whole, in all anti-British feeling in the Middle East before 1953, a point which was a constant source of suspicion and complaint in British circles (Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 520, col. 4, November 3, 1953.) Deep anxiety and alarm developed in Washington as anti-British feelings and the plea for nationalising Persia's oil were turned into a nation-wide movement against all forms of Western influence in that country, and the soothsayers began to put forth their familiar stories of imminent Communist domination of Persia. This made the Americans come round to the British view that Western positions in the Middle East cannot be assured of survival unless American material strength be combined with British political ingenuity in a unified Anglo-American diplomatic system. Such a system was in fact set in motion after Eisenhower's accession to the American presidency, and was manifested by a succession of joint Anglo-American reactions towards the Middle Eastern problems.

In spite of these developments Britain did not succeed in realizing her military and political objects in the Middle East. This was due to her error of leaning too heavily on, and insisting on, Iraq's co-operation at a time when the Arab League was a going concern and Egypt, rejuvenated by a military revolution, seemed to be substantiating her claim to the leadership of the Arab world. Dormant emotions against military alignments concocted by the West were thus naturally aroused with renewed vigour in the Arab countries on the day following the conclusion of the Turco-Iraqi friendship agreement (January 1955). Egypt promptly responded to this challenge<sup>1</sup> with the military agreements of March 1956 with Syria and Saudi Arabia.

But for an idealist Egypt striving to lead the Arabs in all aspects of political life and to provide an ideological justification for each of her policies, a tactical move along the lines of a military alliance with the monarchical Saudi Arabia and the not too reliable Syria was neither adequate nor appropriate. What was required was a consistent and water-tight political Weltanschauung which should be expressed in terms at once appealing to the masses and able to evoke the support of the newly-independent countries of Asia and Africa and which should also meet the requirements of a leadership unable to commit itself to fixed principles in its international relations. All search in this direction with-

---

<sup>1</sup>It is significant that immediate official Egyptian protest against the Turco-Iraqi agreement was based not so much on neutralist arguments, than on the complaint that Iraq had not consulted other Arab governments beforehand. (Cf. 'Udah, op.cit., p. 21 et seq.).



in the bounds of Arab-Islamic political thought had, by the middle of 1955, reached a deadlock. The reason for this, apart from doctrinal inhibitions, as explained at the beginning of this chapter, was the fact that the Arabs' conflict with the West had hitherto prevented the creation of any neutralist tradition in contemporary Arab political thought.

But, if the search for an elaborate theory in justification of an outward neutrality was unsuccessful inside Egypt, it achieved an immediate result outside. India, under Nehru's leadership, provided the ideal solution and accepting India as an edifying example was not accidental. In addition to the inspiring personality of Nehru, who commanded great respect and affection among the Arab intelligentsia, India herself, as a country which had achieved a leading place among the Asians after years of struggle and endurance, had many attractive features for these leaders who had, to some extent, been inspired by Indian nationalism.<sup>1</sup> The occasion on which the idea of neutrality was accepted and officially proclaimed as one of the pillars of modern Arab nationalism was, as we have just said, the Bandung Conference of April 1955, a fraternal occasion where it was quite appropriate for friendly countries to borrow ideas and slogans from each other, whether relevant or irrelevant to their needs.

In the documents of the Bandung Conference, "neutrality" is

---

<sup>1</sup>Udah, op.cit., p.99 et seq.; Neguib, op.cit., p. 49.

described as "non-commitment", and is explained to mean "abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers". To suggest an innovation in phraseology and thereby to give the impression of political initiative, the Nasirites improved on the term "neutrality" by calling it "positive neutrality" hiyād al ijabī.

"The political characteristic of (Egypt's) relations with other countries stems from principles which were initiated by the idea of a "peace zone", developed with the growth of the Afro-Asian group and manifested in the Bandung resolutions. The political characteristic of our relations with other countries is thus non-commitment. But as we are living in this age of a triangular struggle (political, military and economic - against colonialism, for national progress) President Nāsir came to call this principle (non-commitment) 'positive neutrality' in order to express the present situation in a more eloquent way than does the term non-commitment."<sup>1</sup>

Is neutrality a tenable and sincere line for the Arabs to take in their present position in the world?

The meaning of the term neutrality is fairly clear in politics. A routine definition of the term is to refrain from giving offence to either of the hostile parties in a political conflict. One of the oldest and most important problems connected with this status has been how to avoid being dragged into such conflict. If this problem was of some moment as long ago as the time of Grotius, it is of far greater significance in our time when the international community has become more com-

---

<sup>1</sup> Udah, op.cit., p. 108.

pact - thanks to scientific and technical advancements. This compactness has become more obvious in the division of the world into two major political groupings: the Eastern bloc headed by the Soviet Union and the Western bloc led on by the United States. The social, economic and cultural implications have been immense and every branch of human activity, ranging from science to humdrum day-to-day life, has been affected by the freezing and blind logic of the cold war. Every word in political terminology has obtained a different tang suitable to the purposes of the two rival ideologies. Finally, the whole of the world's material and spiritual life is being increasingly identified with either Communism or Western Democracy. Soon after the death of Stalin, when the Soviet leaders started to adjust and normalize their relations with Yugoslavia and non-Communist countries on purely diplomatic and, at the best, economic bases, high hopes were raised that a third force in international politics might come to exist and survive independent of the two great blocs. But these hopes were soon to be frustrated by the subsequent developments in Eastern Europe and the growing stiffness of Western policies.

In spite of all this, we can still say that provided these two hostile blocs do not absorb or destroy each other, there will still remain a limited room for manoeuvre for neutral states outside them. But we can also say that such room is available only to those small or "medium" states which have fully achieved their national independence, and so have a genuine interest in the maintenance of the status quo and world peace.

India can afford to adopt a middle policy because within a decade of obtaining independence she has achieved a relative degree of internal stability and has no important dispute with either of the Great Powers. Burma, also, although still in the throes of dissensions and intrigues, can be neutral because the forces standing in the way of her prosperity have been unconnected with any Great Power and, for this reason, she has no major international dispute.

The Arab countries present a completely different picture. According to the professed opinions of the leaders of modern Arab nationalism, these countries are not only passing through a period of dual struggle against internal corruption and external colonialism, but are also engaged in the fight for reviving and strengthening their unity. As we noted above, the Western Powers are often identified with the obstacles to this unity. In his Philosophy of Revolution Nasir describes Imperialism - and this, by numerous explanations and indications throughout, appears to mean the expansionist Western Powers - as the foremost of the forces united against the Arabs.<sup>1</sup> A conclusion which is inevitably drawn from the book is that the Arabs should devote the bulk of their strength to combating this most powerful enemy. It is also evident that in a bi-polar world, once the Arabs embark on this path, they have inevitably engulfed themselves in the cold war, and this is contrary to all logic of neutrality.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Philosophy of Revolution, p. 98.

The general trend of Arab policies, especially after the adoption of the policy of positive neutrality (1955) provides evidence of this. Egypt's arms deal with Czechoslovakia in June 1955 was an unmistakable move in the Cold War, aimed at offending the West while not fully committing that country to the East. Egypt's and Syria's silence over the Hungarian tragedy in 1956, not only in the organs of the United States but also within their own countries, was just as much helpful to the Soviet Union as Yugoslavia's blessing for the Kadar Government. Numerous economic and technical agreements between the UAR and the Communist countries, especially the Soviet-UAR agreement over the Aswan Dam, have made it difficult for the Arab leaders to go too far in complaining of Soviet duplicity towards the Arabs.

It is to be noted also that the adoption of the policy of positive neutrality itself was partly to seek the favour of the Communist countries. Communism, like Islam, precludes in theory any middle status between Capitalism and itself; "He who is not with us is against us"; such is its familiar motto. But in the thaw that followed the revision of Stalinist principles it became necessary to concede, as a tactical measure, the admissibility of formal abstention from acceding to existing military alignments, with the tacit understanding that the "abstaining country" should in practice tolerate the advance of Communism within its confines.

To sum up. Neutrality is against both the teachings of Islam and the declared aims of Arab nationalism. Its adoption by some Arab countries

as a strategy in international relations has only been a response to the Western pressures and a gesture to please the Eastern bloc. As such, neutrality cannot form a permanent basis of Arab nationalism and is bound to be abandoned sooner or later as the vague slogans of the Cold War are dissolved into clear issues and the Arabs enter the final stage of their battle for unity.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

N.B. After the list of the general sources will follow the names of the books on/or by the authors whose names have appeared in this work; these are arranged in order of the appearance of the authors' names in the thesis.

### I GENERAL

#### A. Arab - Islamic

1. Al Khwaja Hunain Ni' Matallāh Khūrī, at tuhfāt' al adabīyah fī tarīkh tammadun al mamālik al urubawīyah, maṭba' at al ahram, Alexandria, 1877. (V. supra, p. 90 et seq.)
2. Edward G. Browne, The Persian Revolution, Cambridge, 1910.
3. ——— A Literary History of Persia, Cambridge, (Four Volumes), 1920.
4. H. A. R. Gibb, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature" in Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, Vol. IV, 1926-28.
5. Hans Kohn, A History of Nationalism in the East, London, 1929.
6. Ameer Ali, The Spirit of Islam, Christophers, London, 1922.
7. H. A. R. Gibb, Whither Islam?, Victor Gollancz, 1932.
8. George Antonius, The Arab Awakening, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1938.
9. Matiel E. T. Mogannam, The Arab Woman, Herbert Joseph Limited, London, 1937.
10. Louis Massignon, "l'Umma et ses Synonymes" in Revue des Etudes Islamiques, 14, 15 (1), Paris, 1940-46.
11. Richard Hartmann and H. Scheel, Beitrage zur Arabistik, Semitistik und Islamwissenschaft, Otto Harrosswitz, Leipzig, 1944.
12. H. A. R. Gibb, Modern Trends in Islam, The University of Chicago Press, 1947.
13. Richard Hartmann, Islam und Nationalismus, Akademi-Verlag, Berlin, 1948.

14. Ahmad Amin, zu'ama' al iṣlāḥ fi'l 'aṣr al ḥadīth, maktabat' al 'arabiyyah, Cairo, 1948.
15. H. A. R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, Oxford University Press, London, 1949.
16. Joseph Schacht, The Origins of Muhammedan Jurisprudence, Oxford University Press, London, 1950.
17. E. A. Speiser, The United States and the Near East, Harvard University Press, 1950.
18. Nabih Amin Faris wa Muhammad Tawfiq Husain, ḥadh'l 'alam al 'arabi, dar al 'ilm li'l mala'in, Beirut, 1953.
19. Sylvia G. Haim, "Islam and Arab Nationalism" in Die Welt des Islams, N.5., 3, 1953-54.
20. Ishaq Musa al Husaini, azmat' al fikr al 'arabi, dar bairut, Beirut, 1954.
21. Mohammad Shafi Agwani, The United States and the Arab World, Institute of Islamic Studies, Muslim University, Aligarh, 1955.
22. Social Forces in the Middle East, edited by Sydney Nettleton Fisher, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1955.
23. G. E. Von Grunebaum, Islam, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1955.
24. Majid Khadduri, War and Peace in Islam, The Johns Hopkin Press, Baltimore, 1955.
25. Humayun Kabir, Science, Democracy and Islam, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1935.
26. Sylvia Haim, "Islam and Arab Nationalism" in Die Welt des Islams, N.3.4, 1955-56.
27. Yusuf As'ad Daḡhir, maṣadir ad dirasat' al adabiyyah, Beirut, 1955.
28. Hazim Zaki Nuseibeh, The Ideas of Arab Nationalism, Cornell University Press, New York, 1956.
29. Ter Andrae, Muhammad, The Man and His Faith (translated by Theophil Menzil), George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1956.
30. Jurji Zaidan, bunāt an nahḍat' al 'arabiyyah, dar al hilal, Cairo, 1956.
31. Ishak Musa Husaini, The Moslem Brethren, Khayat, Beirut, 1956.



32. Walter Z. Laqueur, Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1957.
33. Muḥammad al Bahay, al fikr al islāmī al ḥadīth wa ḡilatuhū bi'l isti'mār al ḡharbī, Aḡmad 'Alī Muḡhalimīr, Cairo, 1957.
34. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Islam in Modern History, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957.
35. Fayez A. Sayegh, Arab Unity, The Devin Adair Company, New York, 1958.
36. Professor Bernard Lewis, The Arabs in History, Arrow Books, London, 1958.
37. Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society, The Free Press, Glencoe (Illinois), 1958.
38. Ibn Khaldūn, The Muḡaddimah, translated by Franz Rosenthal, Routledge & Kegan Paul, (Three Volumes), London, 1958.
39. Zeine N. Zeine, Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism, Khayat's , Beirut, 1958.
40. Sāmī al Kaiyālī, al adab al 'arabī al mu'asir fī sūriyah, dār al ma'ārif bi miḡr, Cairo, 1959.
41. John S. Badeau, "Islam and the Modern Middle East", in Foreign Affairs, October 1959.
42. Glub Pasha, Britain and the Arabs, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1959.
43. Muḡammad Taḡī al Qumī, qisḡat' at taqrīb, dār at taqrīb, Cairo, April 1960.
44. Morree Berḡer, Military Elite and Social Change, sub-title: Egypt since Napoleon, Princetown University, 1960.
45. Jacques Berḡue, Les Arabs d'Hier à Demain, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1960.
46. Zeine N. Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, Khayat's, Beirut, 1960.
47. Dr. Hassan Saab, The Arab Federalists of the Ottoman Empire, Djambatan, Amsterdam, 1960.
48. Asaf A. A. Fyze, Outlines of Muhammadan Law, Oxford University Press, Second edition, London, 1960.

B. Non-Arab - Islamic

49. Ernest Renan, Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1887.
50. H. G. Wells, The Outlines of History, New York, 1920.
51. Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, The MacMillan Company, New York, 1944.
52. Norman Mackenzie, Socialism: A Short History, Hutchinson's University Library, London, 1949.
53. Nationalism and Internationalism, edited by Edward Mead Earle, Columbia University Press, New York, 1950.
54. Alex Josey, Socialism in Asia, Donald Moore, Singapore, 1954.
55. Christopher Hill, Lenin and the Russian Revolution, The English Universities Press Ltd., London, 1957.
56. M. K. Gandhi, Socialism of my Conception, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1957.
57. Henri Lefebvre, Problèmes Actuels du Marxisme, Press Universitaire de France, Paris, 1958.
58. Elie Kedourie, Nationalism, Hutchinson of London, 1960.

C. Egypt

59. E. W. Lane, An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, London, 1860.
60. A. A. Paton, History of the Egyptian Revolution, Trubner & Co. London, 1870.
61. Martin Hartmann, The Arabic Press of Egypt, Luzac, London, 1899.
62. Alfred Milner, England in Egypt, Edward Arnold, London, 1894.
63. Shafik Ghorbal, The Beginning of the Egyptian Question and the Rise of Mehmet Ali, Routledge, London, 1928.
64. M. Sabry, l'Empire Égyptien sous Mohamed Ali, Librairie Orientale, Paris, 1930.
65. C. C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, Oxford University Press, London, 1933.

66. Lord Lloyd, Egypt Since Cromer, Macmillan & Co., London, 1933.
67. Angelo Samarco, Histoire de l'Égypte Moderne, l'Institut Français d'Archeologie Orientale, Cairo, 1937.
68. J. Heyworth-Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Egypt, Luzac & Co., London, 1938.
69. Charles Issawi, Egypt: An Economic and Social Study, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1947. See also below No. 128 and no. 149 et seq.
70. Heyworth-Dunne, Religious and Political Trends in Modern Egypt, Washington, 1950.
71. Marcel Colombe, l'Évolution de l'Égypte, 1924-1950, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1951.
72. The issues of majallat' al azhar, Cairo, 1952-57.
73. Mohammed Neguib, Egypt's Destiny, Victor Gollancz, London, 1955.
74. 'Abd ar-Rahman ar-rāfi'ī, Tārīkh al harakat' al qawmiyah, maktabat' an nahdat al misriyah, Cairo, (fourth edition), 1955.
75. Jean et Simone Lacouture, l'Égypte en Mouvement, Edition du Seuil, Paris, 1956.
76. Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism, Oxford University Press, London, 1960.
77. Raoul Makarius, La Jeunesse Intellectuelle d'Égypte au Lendemain de la - Deuxieme Guerre Mondiale, Mouton & Co., Paris, 1960.
- 78.
- D. Syria and Lebanon
78. A. H. Hourani, Syria and Lebanon, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1946.
79. Clyde C. Hess Jr., Hebert L. Bodman jr., Confessionalism and Feudality in Lebanese Politics, in The Middle East Journal, 1954, pp. 10-26.
80. Philip K. Hitti, History of Syria, Macmillan, London, 1957.
81. N. A. Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, Ernest Benn Ltd., London, 1957.

82. Kamal Janbalāt, ḥaqīqat' at thawrat' al lubnānīyah, dār an nashr al 'arabīyah, Beirut, 1959.
83. Arnold Hottinger, ḥu'ama' and Parties in the Lebanese Crisis of 1958, The Middle East Journal, Spring, 1961.

E. Other Arab Countries

84. Stephen Hemsley Lengrigg, Iraq 1900-1950, Oxford University Press, London, 1953.
85. P. M. Holt, A Modern History of the Sudan, Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1961.

F. Arab-Jewish Relations and Zionism

86. Paul Goodman and Arthur D. Lewis, Zionism: Problems and Views, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1916.
87. Israel Cohen, A Short History of Zionism, Frederick Muller, London, 1951.
88. S. D. Goitein, Jews and Arabs, Schocken Books Inc., New York, 1955.
89. Reny E. Gabbay, A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict, Librairie E. Droz, Geneva, 1959.

II SPECIFIC

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb

90. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al Wahhāb, Kitāb at tawhīd, Ms. (British Museum), O.R. 4529.
91. ——— Mukhtasar sirat' ar rasul, maṭba'at' aṣ ṣanātī muḥammadiyah, Cairo, 1956.

Rifa'ah Rafi' at Tahtawī

92. Rifa'ah Rafi' at Tahtawī, takhlīṣ al ibris fī talkhīṣ bariz, dār at ṭibā' at' ad amīrah, Cairo, 1848.
93. ——— manāhij al albab al miṣriyah fī mabāhij adāb al 'asriyah, Cairo, 1869.

94. Rifā'ah Rafī' at Tahtāwī, nihayāt' al Ijaz fī sirah sākin al hijāz maṭba' i madaris al mulkiyah, Cairo, 1874.
95. Jamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad ash Shaiyāl, Rifā'ah at Tahtāwī, az za'im an nahdat al-fikriyah fī miṣr Muḥammad 'Alī, 'Aḥlām al Islam, (Cairo) 1947.  
Ya'qūb ibn Rafā'il Sannū'
96. ——— Issues of Abū Naẓẓarah, al Munṣif' and at tawaddud (The Libraries of the School of Oriental and African Studies and the British Museum.)
97. ——— ḥuṣn al ishārah fī musamarāt abī naẓẓarāh, Cairo, 1910.
98. Ibrahīm 'Abduh, abī naẓẓarah, imām as siḥāfat' al fukahiyat' al muṣṣawarah wa za'im al masrah fī miṣr, Cairo, 1953.
99. Irene L. Gendzier, "James Sanua and Egyptian Nationalism" in The Middle East Journal, Washington, Winter 1961.
- Tāhā Ḥusain
100. Tāhā Ḥusain, fi'l adab al jāhillī, dār al ma'ārif bi miṣr, Cairo, 1927.
101. ——— mustaqbal ath thaḳāfah fī miṣr, maṭba' al ma'ārif, Cairo.
102. The Future of Culture of Egypt, Sidney Glazer's translation of the above book, American Council of Learned Societies, Washington, 1954.
103. Tāhā Ḥusain, naqd wa iṣlāh, dār al 'ilm li'l malā'in, Beirut, 1956.  
See also above Nos. 23 and 65.
- Jamāl Sidqī az Zahāwī
104. Louis Massignon, 'Presse Arabe: "La Question du Voile"' in Revue du Monde Musulman, Paris, XII. XI, 1910, p. 466.
105. Mahdī 'Abbās al 'Abirī, haqiqat' az Zahāwī, matba'at' ar rashīd, Baghdad, 1947.  
Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī  
See above Nos. 2, 65.
106. Luṭf Ullāh Khān-i-Asad Ābadī, sharh-i-hāl va āthar-i-seyed djemal-ud-dīn (sic) asad abadī ma'rūf bi afghani. (Persian Text), Publications Iranschahr, Berlin, 1926.

107. Nazim ul Islām-i-Kirmanī, tārīkh-i-bīdārī-i-īrānīān (Persian text), Tehran, 1953. (Second edition).
108. Muḥammad al Makḥṣūmī's khāṭirāt Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī, maṭba'at al 'ilmīyah, Beirut, 1931.
109. Abd al Qādir al Maghrībī, Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī, Iqra', No. 68, dār al ma'ārif, (? Cairo).
110. Muḥammad Sillam Madkūr, Jamāl ad Dīn al Afghānī, ba'ith al nahḍat' al fikriyah fi'sh sharq, Cairo, 1937.
111. Muḥammad 'Abd al Fattāh's ashḥar mashāḥīr Ūḍaba' ash sharq, al maktabat' al miṣriyah, Vol. II, Cairo (no date).
112. A. M. Geichon's introduction to Refutation des materialistes, Librairie Orientaliste, Paris, 1942.
113. Murtadā Muddarīsī Chāḥārdahī, zindigānī ijtīmā'ī va siyāsī'ī 'sayid Jamāl ad dīn Afghānī (Persian text), Eḡbal, Tehran, 1955.
114. Jamāl ad Dīn al Ḥusainī al Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh, al urwat' al wuthqa wa'l thawrat' al tahrirīyat' al kubra, Cairo, 1957.
- Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā
- See above Nos. 65, 76.
115. Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, tārīkh al ustādh al imām, maṭba'at al manār, 1931.
116. The issues of al manār (Cairo, 1898-1936.)
- 'Abd ar Raḥmān al Kawākibī
117. 'Abd ar Raḥmān al Kawākibī, ṭaba'ī' al istibdād wa maṣāri' al isti'bād maṭba'at' al ma'ārif, Cairo 1904.
118. ——— umm al curā, no print, no date.
119. Dr. Sāmī ad Dahḥān, 'Abd ar Raḥmān al Kawākibī, dār al ma'ārif bi miṣr, Cairo, 1955.
120. Muḥammad Khalaf Allāh, al Kawākibī, ḥayātuhu wa ārauhū, maktabat' al 'arab, Cairo, 1956.
121. Norbert Tapiere, Les Idées Reformistes d'Al Kawākibī, Les Editions Arabes, 1956.

See also above Nos. 14, 47.

'Alī 'Abd ar Rāziq.

122. 'Alī 'Abd ar Rāziq, al islām 'wa usūl al hukm, Second Edition, maḥba'ah miḡr, Cairo, 1925.
123. ——— hukm haī'ah kibār al 'ulamā' fī kitāb al islām 'wa usūl al hukm, maḥba'ah salafiyah, Cairo, 1925.
124. Shaikh Muhammad Bakhīt, haqīqat' al islām 'wa usūl al hukm, maḥba'at 'as salafiyah, Cairo, 1926.
125. Rāziq, al ijmā' fi'sh sharī'at' al islāmīyah, dār al fikr al 'arabī, Cairo, 1947.

See also above no. 65.

Mustafa Kāmil

126. Moustafa Kamel Pacha, Égyptiens et Anglais (with an introduction by Juliette Adam), Perrin et Cie., Paris, 1906.
127. 'Abd ar Raḥmān ar Rāfi'ī, Mustafa Kāmil, bā'ith al harakat' al watanīyah, matba'at' ash sharq, Cairo, 1939.
128. Jacob Landau, Parliamentary Institutions and Political Parties in Egypt, (1866-1924), (thesis), University of London 1949.
129. Fritz Steppat, Nationalismus und Islam bei Mustafa Kāmil, die Welt des Islams, IV, Leiden, 1856.

Adīb Ishāq

130. ——— ad durar, maktabat' al 'arab, Beirut, 1909.

Najīb 'Azurī

131. The issues of l'Indépendance Arab, Paris, April 1907 to September 1908. (Library of the School of Oriental Studies).
132. Eugène Jung, La Révolte Arabe, Libraire Colbert, Paris 1924.
133. Kamoffmeyer, "Dokumente zum Kampf der Araber um ihre Unabhängigkeit," in Die Welt des Islams, VIII, 1923-1926, p. 99.

Sāṭi' al Husrī

134. Sāṭi' al Husrī, difā' an al 'urūbah, dār al 'ilm l'il malā'in, Beirut, 1956.

135. Saḥīḥ al Ḥuḡrī, al 'urūbah bain du'atihā wa mu'aridihā, dār al 'ilm l'il malā'in, Beirut, 1957.
136. — arā' wa ahādith fi'l qawmiyat' al 'arabiyyah, dār al 'ilm l'il malā'in, Beirut, 1959.
137. — al bilād al 'arabiyyah wa'l dawlat' al uthmaniyyah, dār al 'ilm l'il malā'in, Beirut, 1960.

Ahmad ash Shaibani

138. Ahmad ash Shaibani, al usus ath thawarawiyah l'il qawmiyat' al 'arabiyyah, maḥba'at al jumburiyyah, Damascus, 1958.

'Abdul Malik 'Udah

139. 'Abdul Malik 'Udah, muhadarāt siyasiyyah, maktabat' al anjilo'l miḡriyyah, Cairo, 1958.

'Abd ar Rahman al Bazzāz

140. Sylvia Haim, "Islam and Arab Nationalism" in Die Welt des Islams, N. 5, 3, 1953-54.

Dr. Munif ar Razzāz

141. Munif ar Razzāz, ma'alim al hayat' al 'arabiyyat' al jadidah, dār al 'ilm l'il malā'in, Beirut, 1959.

Muhammad Darawzah

142. Muhammad Darawzah, ad dustūr al qur'anī fī shu'un al hayāt, dār ihyā' al kutub al 'arabiyyah, Cairo, 1956.

143. — al wahdat' al 'arabiyyah, maktabat' al tijārī, Beirut.

144. — tārīkh al jins al 'arabī, al maktabat' al 'aḡriyyah, Beirut, (three volumes), 1957.

Nabih Amin Fāris

145. Nabih Amin Fāris, min az zawiyat' al arabiyyah, dār bairūt, Beirut, 1953.

See also above No. 18.



Mishlī 'Aflaq

146. Mishlī 'Aflaq, ma'rakat' al maṣīr al wāhid, dār al ādāb, Beirut, 1953.

147. ——— fi sabīl al ba'th al 'arabī, dār aṭ ṭalī'ah (? Beirut), 1959.

Jurj Hanna

148. Dr. Jurj Hanna, waqī' al 'alam al 'arabī, dār al 'ilm li'l malā'in, Beirut, 1952.

Jamāl 'Abd an Nāsir

149. The issues of al ahrām, Cairo, from 1952 to 1959.

150. The Philosophy of the Revolution, Public Affairs Press, Washington, 1955, p.

151. Anwar el Sadat, Revolt on the Nile, Allan Wingate, London, 1957.

152. Ṭaha 'Abd al Baqī Surūr, Jamāl 'abd an Nāsir, rajul<sup>3</sup> hayyara waih at tarīkh, al maktabat' al 'ilmīyah, Cairo, 1957.

153. George Vaucher, Gamal Abdul Nasser et son Équipe, sub-title: Les années d'humiliation et la conquête du pouvoir, Julliard, Paris, 1959.

154. Gamal Abdul Nāsir, "Where I stand and Why?", Life International, 17 August 1959.

155. Wilton Wynn, Nasser of Egypt. The Search for Dignity, Arlington Books, Cambridge, 1959.

156. Keith Wheelock, Nasser's New Egypt, Stevens and Sons, London, 1960.

157. Joachim Joesten, Nasser. The Rise to Power, Odhams Press, London, 1962.